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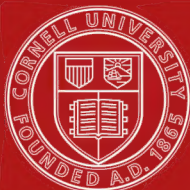
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The forayers; or, The raid of the dog-day



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THE

FORAYERS



THE
FORAYERS

OR

THE RAID OF THE DOG-DAYS

BY W. GILMORE SIMMS, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "THE PARTISAN"—"MELLICHAMPE"—"KATHARINE WALTON"—
"THE SCOUT"—"WOODCRAFT"—"THE YEMASSEE"—"GUY RIVERS," ETC.

CONST. Hark, how our steeds for present service neigh !
DAUPHIN. Mount them, and make incision in their hides,
That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,
And daunt them with superfluous courage.

KING HENRY THE FIFTH.



REDFIELD
34 BEEKMAN STREET, NEW YORK
1855.

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TO
GEN. D. F. JAMISON,
OF ORANGEBURG, S. C.

MY DEAR JAMISON—

YOU will find, in the tale which follows, that I have borrowed freely from your notes. It is but proper that I should make this acknowledgment, while paying my tribute to your worth, your friendship, and the grateful intimacy which has so long existed between us.

Ever faithfully yours, &c.

W. GILMORE SIMMS.

WOODLANDS, S. C.
June 10, 1855.

INTRODUCTION.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

THE reader who has done me the honor to keep progress with me in the several journeys which I have made into the somewhat obscure regions of our historical romance—who has, in brief, read my novels, the “Partisan,” “Mellichampe,” “Katharine Walton,” and “The Scout,” will remember that I have endeavored to maintain a proper historical connection among these stories, corresponding with the several transitional periods of the Revolutionary war in South Carolina. While the “Partisan” opened the drama with the fall of Charleston, the “Scout” closed with the siege of “Ninety-Six;” an event which, though it left the victory in the hands of the British, left them, at the same time, in a condition of such feebleness, as to render their temporary triumph of little value to their fortunes. The post was abandoned as soon as rescued from the besiegers, and Lord Rawdon, apprehensive of dangers which were sufficiently apparent upon the horizon to every veteran eye, took up his line of march, with all possible expedition, for the Low Country, and the securities of the seaboard.

The "Partisan" closed with the melancholy defeat of the first southern continental army under Gates, at Camden. "Mellichampe" illustrated the interval between this event and the arrival of Greene, with the rude material for the organization of a second army; and was more particularly intended to do honor to the resolute and hardy patriotism of the scattered bands of patriots, who still maintained a predatory warfare against the foe among the swamps and thickets, rather keeping alive the spirit of the country, than operating decisively for its rescue. "The Scout," originally published under the name of "The Kinsmen," occupied a third period, when the wary policy of Greene began to make itself felt, in the gradual isolation and overthrow of the detached posts and fortresses which the enemy had established with the view to overawe the people in the leading precincts of the state; while "Katharine Walton," closing the career of certain parties, introduced to the reader by the "Partisan," and making complete the trilogy begun in that work, was designed to show the fluctuations of the contest, the spirit with which it was carried on, and to embody certain events of great individual interest, connected with the fortunes of persons not less distinguished by their individual worth of character, and their influence upon the general history, than by the romantic circumstances growing out of their career.

This narrative brought down the record to a period, when, for the first time, the British were made to understand that the conflict was doubtful; that their conquests were insecure, and that, so far from extending their arms over the interior, it became a question with them whether they should be able to maintain their hold upon the strong places of which they had so long held possession. Their country-posts had mostly fallen into the hands of the partisans, and such as remained were momentarily threatened with like fortune. To maintain themselves in Charleston and Savannah, the necessity was pressing that they should contract their powers, and concentrate their forces.

Reinforcements from Europe were hardly to be expected. The British empire was in a state of exhaustion, and the army of the invader was now half made up of the provincial loyalists.

It is proposed, in the present story, to resume the historical narrative at this period; making it subordinate, however—as has been the plan of the preceding volumes—to other events, in which the writer will naturally seek to illustrate the social condition of the country, under the influence of those strifes and trials which give vivacity to ordinary circumstances, and mark with deeper hues, and stronger colors, and sterner tones, the otherwise common progress of human hopes and fears, passions and necessities.

The operations of the British in South Carolina, after the abandonment of Ninety-Six, were contracted almost entirely within that section of country, which is enclosed by the Santee, the Congaree, and Edisto rivers. They were wholly concentrated in the alluvial regions, or what is called the Low Country. Here, Rawdon proposed to keep his forces in hand, ready for emergencies, and hoped, undertaking no enterprises, to make a sufficient stand against the American troops. But, even for this, it was soon found that his strength was inadequate, and that Greene was confident enough to offer him battle on the Edisto. With a melancholy instinct, warning him of humiliating reverses, Lord Rawdon anticipated the mortification of final defeat, by yielding the command of the army to Colonel Stewart, retiring himself, after a brief pause at Orangeburg, to the walls of Charleston, where, he lingered only long enough to stain his good name by the sanguinary execution of Hayne, and then departed for Europe.

One single farther statement will suffice to put the reader in possession of the relative position of the opposing forces. The numerical strength of Greene and Stewart was nearly equal. Apart from the garrison at Charleston, and a detachment under Colonel Cruger, slowly approaching from above, the army of

Colonel Stewart may have numbered from fifteen hundred to two thousand men; that of Greene was fully the latter number, but mostly composed of militia. But, though Greene lacked in regular infantry, he was more than a match for his opponent in cavalry. In this respect, he was well served. There was no better cavalry in the world, and it grew more numerous every day, by accessions from the country gentry.

It will be seen from this statement, that Greene, though not unwilling to fight, was yet in no condition to invite the combat except on his own terms. For this, Rawdon and Stewart were equally unwilling. Strongly posted as they were in Orangeburg, it would have been madness in Greene to have forced the trial of strength upon them, and Stewart, left suddenly in command, felt too heavily the weight of responsibility upon him, to undertake any bold adventure. There were reasons for his forbearance, other than his own sense of responsibility, which sufficiently excused his apathy. But these reasons will properly find development in the course of our story. It is then understood that our narrative opens at the moment when Rawdon is preparing to yield the care of the army to the charge of his lieutenant, at the moment when, approaching Orangeburg as a post of rest, after the retreat from Ninety-Six, after the abandonment and destruction of Camden, after the loss of almost all of their posts in the interior, the British, after an exhausting march, weary and desponding, are seeking to snatch a momentary rest from fatigue and danger—not willing to seek their foes, and scarcely able to cover themselves from pursuit. They were soon to be strengthened by a body of thirteen hundred men, chiefly loyalists, under the command of Cruger, late commandant at the post of Ninety-Six; but of his approach, as yet, they knew but little, and had every reason to apprehend that he might be cut off, burdened as was his train by clouds of fugitives, with their families, from the upper country, and followed closely by Pickens, one of the most famous partisans of Carolina.

Nothing, indeed, saved them but the exhausted condition of Pickens's cavalry, which, to use his own language, "could neither get up with the enemy, nor get away from him." To excuse the lack of enterprise in both armies, it is only necessary to add that hunger and nakedness were at work among them. Provisions could not be procured on any terms. The country was exhausted; and very cheerfully would both parties have taken the field for food, when they would have hesitated to do so for more noble considerations.

But we may safely leave it to the novelist to pursue the narrative in place of the historian. Enough has been shown of the chronicle to place the reader in full possession of the relative strength and condition of the contending forces. The Americans are gaining confidence with every moment of pause; the British, gathering themselves up for the last struggle, prior to their expulsion from a region, of which, for a long season, they had enjoyed the pleasant fruits. Suspense, anxiety and apprehension, like so many heavy clouds, to say nothing of a long and scorching summer, hung over the fortunes of the contending armies, and seemed to paralyze their energies.

But the partisans have their work to do in spite of these discouraging influences. They were allowed no such respite as was accorded to the regular army, and throughout the whole exhausting period of summer, their cavalry was kept in motion startling the British with incessant alarms; hovering about their posts, snatching up their convoys, and occasionally cutting off their detachments. In this sort of work, we find all our great captains of partisans equally engaged, Marion, Sumter, Pickens, Lee, Maham, Harden, the two Hamptons, Horry, Taylor, and many others. By these, even under the blazing heats of July and August, the country was literally swept, as with a fiery besom, through all that region the boundaries of which have already been described. This was the famous campaign of "The Dog-Days," a season proverbial for the wonderful endu-

rance and audacity of the partisans, when the regular troops of neither army could make a day's march, without the loss of numbers perishing from the heat. In the retreat of Rawdon from Ninety-Six, more than fifty soldiers dropped dead upon the march; and subsequently—but we must not anticipate. We have already trespassed somewhat, in these slight glances at the province which we propose to assign to our story.

THE FORAYERS.

CHAPTER I.

'BRAM'S CABIN IN THE SWAMP.

THE district of Orangeburg, in South Carolina, constitutes one of the *second tier* (from the seaboard) of the political and judicial divisions or districts of that state. It is a vast plain, with a surface almost unbroken, in the southern and western portions, by elevations of any sort. In this region, it is irrigated by numerous watercourses, rivers, and creeks, that make their way through swamps of more or less width and density. These are all thickly covered with a wild and tangled forest-growth, skirted with great pines, and dwarf-oaks, to say nothing of a vast variety of shrub-trees; the foliage of which, massed together by gadding vines, usually presents, in mid-summer, the appearance of a solid wall, impervious to sight and footstep.

The precinct received its first European settlers in 1704. These, originally the subjects of the prince of Orange, naturally conferred his name upon the district. But the settlements were not confined to this people. Along the Santee, the Congaree, and Edisto, there were Huguenot and English families, that came in afterward; and, occasionally, a small group of Scotch, and protestant Irish, might be found, occupying tracts which were comparatively isolated from all others.

These several settlements maintained each its original national characteristics; and, even at the opening of the Revolution, there had been little or no amalgamation among them. They

did not even associate; and the only cementing agency which they acknowledged, bringing the several parties into social relation, grew gradually, in the growth of a native population. The children of all parties spoke the English language, and this proved a bond of union, in the absence of other ties, of a strength sufficient to neutralize, in a great degree, the original antipathies of the parent stocks.

Near the creeks and rivers, the settlements were, naturally, most numerous; and, speaking with regard to the standard acknowledged among the people, these watercourses were comparatively thickly inhabited. Along the Santee, for example, and the two great lines of thoroughfare from Charleston to the Congarees, the sound of a horn, in times of danger, could bring out, almost anywhere, a score of mounted men; though we need scarcely inform our readers, in respect to a region so lacking in homogeneity—during the revolutionary period—that the same means would be just as apt to find them divided very equally into opposing parties. The French, or Huguenot settlements, would be sure to wear whig colors; so also the Irish; the Scotch and English were mostly dogged loyalists; while the German population were nearly equally divided in sentiment between the colony and the crown.

Of the native born, a vast majority were patriots, particularly the younger men; and these, necessarily brought together from all the settlements, blended the otherwise adverse national sentiments of the original stocks, into that rare sort of union, which Anacreon Moore rather fancifully describes as the “one arch of peace.” To this mingling of their young, was due, in some degree, the occasional forbearance of the parents; many of whom, on both sides, took parole or protection, and forebore the field; as much because of the committal of their sons, as because of any selfish apprehensions of their own.

There was still a fair proportion, however, who felt, or acknowledged, none of these restraints; and who, whether from a natural and earnest sentiment of loyalty, or because of their full faith in the powers of the German sovereign on the throne of Britain, to coerce his rebellious subjects into obedience, joined the banner of the king as soon as it was unfurled, and proved themselves as fierce and unsparing, as if they dealt only

with their natural enemies. It is not our purpose here to indicate the various causes which led the people to choose opposition on either side ; but, we may add, that, as in all such cases, there were baser motives also at work ; there were private feuds to avenge, hot rivalries to assuage, and plunder to be won. It may be that the progress of our history will unfold all of these motives in turn.

There is a small watercourse, buried in swamp and thickly fringed with a natural and noble forest-growth, which, rising at nearly equal distances between the Santee and the Edisto, finds its way at last into the latter river. This stream goes still by the old rustic title of the Four-Holes swamp. In the times of which we write, it was one of the places of refuge for the outlying patriot. The settlements along its upland margin were infrequent ; and, though skirted by one of the common thoroughfares of the county, the region was of too suspicious a character to suffer the traveller to linger as he rode. There was nothing to woo the lover of the picturesque in the prospect around him, and curiosity had but little motive to pierce the dark and silent recesses of those thickets which seemed impenetrable from without ; and the mysterious stillness and obscurity of which, were well calculated to arm the instincts of the wayfarer with a tremulous sense of danger. He rarely suffered himself or his steed to pause and bait as he sped over the route, so long as the gloomy shadows of this great thicket were cast upon his path.

It is to this very region, however, that we propose to conduct the reader now. We shall penetrate the silent and shadowy fortress of swamp and forest, following a footpath which you would scarcely discover for yourself ; the traces of which, from without, are quite undiscernible by the uninitiated. We enter a creek, breaking boldly through a fence of willows. Our steeds leave no track in the water. We follow the stream for fifty yards, and knee-deep in the swamp we are surrounded by a wood of cypresses. Before us another fortress of forest spreads away, thick and matted. We press boldly up against it, and a faint gleam of light appears, as shining through a crevice, on our left. We descend, following this gleam. It opens sufficiently to admit of our passage through a copse of cane and

willows over which hang great branches of gum and tupola. We pass a hammock, thickly covered with woods. And still our way lies through water. The path grows sinuous and would be lost, but for certain marks upon the branches of the trees under which we are required to move. *You* would not see these marks. No one could see them, were they not shown; or decipher their mystic uses, were they not explained. They have been carefully made, not only to escape the casual glance, but to shape, step by step, the course of him who has been taught the cipher. The refuge has been often sought. It has hitherto justified the hope of security which it promised. The spot was long known and honored after the Revolution, as "Bram Johnson's Castle."

But we have not reached "Bram's Castle" yet. There is still a tract of wood and water to be passed. The refuge is one designedly difficult of access, and even to him who knows the indices by which to find it, the way is circuitous and the paths difficult. But we will suppose these to be overcome. The region has been laid bare since the war, and many have been the curious spectators whom the familiar scout has conducted to the curious hiding-place of the patriots. Let us penetrate at once to the recess, supposing the difficult progress to be overcome, and emerging suddenly from the thicket and swamp, upon a hammock, an islet of the swamp, covered with mighty trees, pine and beech, a sandy spot, high, dry, and sheltered, as if a retreat for the *Genius Loci*, whom we will suppose a bearded Druid, brooding in silence while he grows to stone, and the gray moss winds about him, a natural shroud for the High Priest of a perished people.

It was on the afternoon of one of the hottest days of June—one of the hottest months in Carolina—in the year of grace one thousand seven hundred and eighty-one, that a horseman made his way along the route described, and penetrated to the little swamp islet, or hammock, upon which the cabin of Bram Johnson stood. The stranger was very certainly a military man, though it would be difficult to describe his costume as a military uniform. He evidently belonged to the irregular service. His clothes were of a dark blue, and consisted of an overall, or hunting-shirt, of linen or cotton material. His small-

clothes were of the same material, and leggins, of blue also, much after the Indian fashion, completed his outfit. The cap which he wore was of common fur, without feather. He carried a broadsword at his side, and pistols, doubly shotted, filled his holsters. His steed was a glorious black, without spot upon all his body, one white star excepted, which was conspicuous upon his right fore shoulder. The rider was of vigorous build; not so heavy as compact and symmetrical; some five feet eleven inches high, erect of carriage, and probably twenty-seven years of age. He had a finely-formed oval face, well bronzed, cheeks full, chin prominent, and eyes gray and searching as the eagle's. The forehead was broad, the head high, and the chestnut curls escaped beneath his cap, and hung loose and long upon his shoulder. Clearly, there was need for shears and razor, the beard being quite as long and massive as the hair.

Our horseman had penetrated all the avenues leading to the hammock of 'Bram Johnson, without disturbing any echoes. He stopped his steed when about to emerge upon the banks, and alighted where he stood, fastening the animal to a swinging bough that hung above the creek. With his sabre in his hand the rider quietly ascended the hammock, and made his way forward, with the stride of one quite sure of his ground, and without apprehending interruption. He was clearly one of those in possession of the "*open sesame*." He passed quietly but confidently among the great beeches, cypresses, and sycamores, which covered the islet, until his eye caught glimpses of a vein of smoke that rose from the cabin of 'Bram Johnson. Then he paused for a moment, and, stealing from tree to tree, as if suddenly counselled with the necessity of caution, he continued to press forward, in this stealthy manner, until the wigwam of the negro stood full in sight before him.

It was a very sultry afternoon, as we have said, on one of the hottest days in our hottest month. The present season was, if possible, far hotter than usual; and, in that dense empire of shrub and forest, where the winds could at no time penetrate with vigour—where they could not course or sweep, but only trickle, as it were—the atmosphere weighed like a coppery fluid upon the universal nature. The stranger had sensibly

felt its pressure, and his movements had been slow accordingly. The perspiration streamed from his brows, and the blood throbbed violently in the veins upon his forehead. But the sight that met his eyes seemed to make him forgetful of his own exhaustion. A smile curled his lips, and rested upon his noble features, like a soft sunset upon a happy landscape. It was evident that his was a lively nature, keenly susceptible of the playful and the humorous. He paused, and the words rose to his lips, as if spoken in the ears of a companion.

"Now, look at that rascally negro. There he sits, drowsing in the sunset, mouth wide, and every sense steeped in forgetfulness. An alligator might take him as he sleeps, and make his first mouthful of him before he could open his eyes. Yet is he set to watch and wait. He has gorged himself with ter-rapin and rice. He has probably had a fat possum for dinner; or, possibly, has contrived to pick up some luckless pig, straying out of hearing of Holman's sty. He, at all events, will contrive to feed and fatten though his master starves."

Thus saying, the stranger quietly drawing his sabre, smote a hickory shoot from a neighboring tree, and thus armed he approached the sleeping negro. 'Bram [Abram] was a portly fellow, loosely clad, a white homespun shirt and duck trowsers constituting his only coming. The shirt was open at the breast, displaying a broad massive trunk, like that of Hercules. The sweat rolled down from his face and neck, or stood out upon his skin in big bead-like drops that glistened like oil. His deep breathing was like that of a young cayman, crying for his supper. Never was being more happily unconscious of what the morrow was to bring forth. A smart stroke of the hickory over his shoulders suddenly enlightened him. A second brought him to his feet, and fairly opened his eyes. Rubbing his irritated shoulder with one hand, while he threw out the other in defence, he cried—

"Wha' de debbil dat! who dat, I say, da hit maussa nigger wid hick'ry?"

The stroke was repeated, and the fellow opened his eyes this time to a full knowledge of the person in whose presence he stood.

"Ki! Mass Willie, da you?"

"And this is the way, you rascal, that you watch the camp when I am gone?"

"Psho, maussa, I bin see you all de time! I know he bin you from de fuss [first]."

"Then you must have a famous passion for hickory, you rascal, to receive three cuts of it before letting me know that you were awake."

"Psho! de hick'ry aint hutt [hurt]."

"Ah! will you try a little more of it?" But the black retreated, rubbing his shoulders afresh.

"Tank you, Mass Willie; but 'scuse me, ef you please; no more dis time. Next time, maybe, I will tank you for anoder tas'e [taste]."

"You will get more than a taste, 'Bram, if I catch you another time, sleeping in broad daylight, when your business was to keep close watch until Ballou came in. Suppose the tories had found you out?"

"Oh! maussa, he bin so hot dis ebning, and I jis bin loss myself wid sleep when you bin coming. I no bin quite 'sleep neider, for I t'ink I bin yerry de hoss, and t'ink I bin see somebody cross my eye jis when you come up on de hammock. I don't t'ink I bin loss myse'f 'tall."

"Shut up, and don't lie to me, 'Bram! But this sort of watching will never do! Suppose it had been one of Carmichael's tories instead of me?"

"How tory guine fin' he way yer, Mass Willie?"

"How did we find our way here?"

"Oh, we berry differen' sort of peoplë, maussa. We hab sense, maussa. More dan dat, enty I know dem tory is all gone up de country wid de red coats."

"But they are coming back as fast as possible, and some of them will no doubt arrive in Orangeburg to-night or to-morrow."

"Ki! you say so, maussa?"

"Yes, indeed, you rascal; and if this is the way that you watch when you are sent out, we shall have a round chance of being taken,—every mother's son of us, by Coffin's cavalry, or Fisher's scouting parties."

"Wha' de use for you talk so, Mass Willie, when you knows its onpossible. How dem poor little carrion hoss of Coffin guine

run we down? How dem dutty [dirty] nigger of Fisher guine fin' we out? Enty I know he can't come it, try he bes'; as for dem cabalry of Coffin, he gone up t'ree week ago. I shum [see um] when he pass t'rough Orangebu'g. He bin down, some of dem, to young missis place, and bring off heap of corn and fodder. I speck Pete Blodgit will tell you all 'bout it when you axes um; dat is, if he aint too big a rascal; and I'm jubous 'bout he rascality—dat samé Pete."

"What do you know about it, 'Bram?"

"He *sell* de cawn and fodder, maussa, to de redcoat. He git de money for 'em."

"I know that already. But did you learn how much he sold?"

"I bin watch close. He sell heap. De redcoat feed dere t'ree days; den he carry off t'ree, sebben, five, eleben wagon loads of cawn and fodder—all up to Orangebu'g."

"No, nonsense, 'Bram. I know you don't love Pete Blodgit, but that's no reason why you should lie about him. How many wagon-loads were carried off?"

"I speck he hab seben or eleben, maussa, da's a trute."

"Seven—or eleven!"

"Yes; de cawn bin at de bottom, de fodder on top. I can't tell how much, but Pete get money for 'em. I see de goul'in he hand, more dan I kin 'count."

"That, too, I know; but can you guess how much?"

"He hab he han' *full*—more dan full! I see dat! But I can't count 'em, whay I bin hide!"

"Where did you hide to see all this?"

"Bury up in de fodder in de loff [loft]. I lay down wid my mouth 'pon hole in de floor, an' I bin look t'rough de floor 'pon Pete Blodgit and the o'd'ly sargen' where him an' Pete bin down in the stable. He git he han' full of goul'guinies; dat I know; and he hab han', maussa—you ebber bin obzarb Pete Blodgit han', maussa!—he hab hand like shubble [shovel]!"

"I believe you are right, 'Bram, about the measure of his hands, but—"

"To be sure, I right! He heb em like shubble, for true; and he kin shet he han' on wha' he git, maussa, I tell you. Ha! dat Pete Blodgit, maussa;—keep you eye 'pon 'em! You guine fin' 'em out yit, some day. He's a most dutty rascal."

"Hush, 'Bram: no more of that. I will keep my eye upon both of you. And now, what of Ballou? Has he been drinking again?"

"He guine ebber lef' off drink, maussa, so long as Jimmaker run? Jim Ballou *mus'* drink if he hab Jimmaker. He soak all day las' Sunday."

"Was he sober the day when he went off?"

"I speck so; but dere's no telling, maussa. He so usen to drink, dat, drunk or sober, he hab he leg always."

"You were down at Holly-Dale, 'Bram, and saw Henry."

"Nebber see Mass Henry; he bin gone somewhar'. See Miss Bertha. He [she] ax 'bout you, maussa! Ha! You bin look 'pon em when he ax 'bout you, wid he eye look down, and de red kibber [cover] all he face, you feel warm all 'bout de heart. He's a most beautiful gal child, is Miss Bert'a."

"Did you see the old gentleman?"

"Wha'! de cappin? Enty he cuss me, for d—n bull-head son ob a buffalo! Look yer, Mass Willie, keep you eye sharp 'pon dat same ole Cappin Trabis. He hab heep o' dealing wid dem tory in de Fork. He eat dinner wid dem redcoat in de garrison at Orangebu'g. He git British guineas and high price for ebbry t'ing he kin sell in Orangebu'g. You t'ink he hab good feeling for you, Mass Willie, cause you fadder and him bin togedder in de ole Cherokee war!—you t'ink he look kin' 'pon you when you gone to see Miss Bert'a? nebber blieb em! He's no better, I tell you, dan a d—n tory."

"Silence, sir. No more of this."

"I can't silence, maussa! Look you, enty I look 'pon em, arm in arm, walking de piazza wid dat Dick Inglehardt. You know Dick Inglehardt. Enty he tory to de backbone? Well, you know wha' he go for when he gone to Holly-Dale?"

The negro watched the effect of his information upon his master's visage. He did not deceive himself in the conjecture that what he said would make the other look grave. With a subdued voice, the master inquired:—

"Was Richard Inglehardt at Holly-Dale when you were there the other day?"

"To be show [sure] he bin day! Big as a gineral, walking up and down de piazza, as who but he!"

"Did he see *you*, 'Bram?"

"Catch me at dat, Mass Willie! Oh! no, when I shum, I back into de bush. I know bery well, ef he see 'Bram, he say to hese—'Bram maussa no fur off. He bin day heap o' times lately, I speck. I shum riding out from Orangebu'g wid de ole cappin. Bote of dem hab shot in de eye."

"What! drunk?"

"Jis' dat, and not'ing else; but 'twas arter dinner, Maussa, close on to sundown, and when a genpleman has a sawt o' right, you know, to onsettle his standing wid a sawt o' sentiment."

"You are getting equally elegant in your modes of thought and speech, Abram; and if you would only drop your habit of swearing, there's no telling the degree of elegance to which you might arrive. But let us look into your cabin. I want my homespun."

"Wha'! you guine a'sguising yourself agin, Mass Willie. I speck you guine right off now to Hollydale. You mus' look sharp 'bout you ef you guine dere."

"No matter where I go, 'Bram; it is not exactly my cue to let you know all my movements."

"Ha! you better! you better tek [take] me wid you. You git in trouble some day, when 'Bram aint close by to help you out o' de ditch. Dem tory will sure for fin' you out, some day, t'rough all dat 'sguising; and taint yaller homspun, and coon-skin cap, and bushy wig and whisker wha' guine hide you from 'em, when you stan' up so straight in your mocksens, and show sich leg as dat t'rough your leggins."

"You are a cunning rascal, 'Bram," replied the other with a smile, laying his hand upon the negro's shoulder kindly as he spoke, while the latter applied his key to the padlock. The door of the cabin was open, and the two went in together.

When, after a space, the master reappeared from the cabin, he was completely disguised in the rude, simple garments of the poorest sort of countrymen. He had, besides, taken the precaution to stain his face and hands, with a thin decoction of some native roots from the woods, so that the fair white and red of his complexion were hidden in a gipsy sort of bronze, which, to any but a very close examination, would seem natural enough.

We do not care to report the further dialogue between the parties. It will not concern our narrative. The master extended his hand.

"And now, 'Bram, I must leave you. I must ride to Pete Blodgit's to-night. Take care of yourself, and do not leave the cabin on any account till Ballou returns. One or other of you must be here always. I have dropped a letter in the hollow for Colonel Singleton. Should he come while you are here, or any of his officers, say to him, or them, that the Great Buffalo means to lie down for awhile, and rest upon the hills."

"De high hills, Mass Willie."

"Ay, ay, the high hills of Santee; and say further, that the Gamecock wants them to hear his crow, and join him for a great flight below."

"I comperhends, maussa. I knows. De Gamecock—"

"I only wish you to repeat what I say, 'Bram; it is not necessary that you should comprehend it. If you have one fault, 'Bram, more than another, which I could wish you to correct, it is that of being a little too wise for your master."

"Oh! psho, Mass Willie. Git out! Don't be a poking fun wid a sharp finger at you nigger. But, one ting, Mass Willie. I yer say day hab mak' you promoted. You's a ginneral now, or somet'ing or udder like it."

"Only a major, 'Bram; only a major!"

"But dat's de nex' ting, or mighty close on to a ginneral, I'm a t'inking."

"Good-bye, 'Bram!"—offering his hand.

"God bless you, Mass Willie; God for ebber bless you, and sen' you safe, wid a warm spur, trough de berry camp ob de enemy."

"The prayer may be more reasonable than you dream of, old fellow. Good-bye, 'Bram."

He shook the negro's hand affectionately and departed as he came. 'Bram followed him to the edge of the hammock, and when he had gone from sight—buried in the thick woods in front—and when his horse's tread could be heard no longer, the faithful slave murmured, with half a sigh, a tear glistening in his eye as he turned back to his cabin:—

"God bress he heart! God bress he heart! I lub 'em like

my own chile. But I always fear'd when I shum go off widout 'Bram. I knows wha' he is, for running he hoss 'mong dem tory. He aint fear'd of dem tory no more dan I fear'd of grasshopper. Le' [let] any of dem speak to him wid sassy tongue, and how he will smash he teet'. Ha! I 'member dat scrimmage by M'Code ferry; den de one down by Lenud's; den up ag'in in Lynch's; I yer de ole Gamecock say, hese'f, dat Willie Sinclair is all h-ll for a charge! I so wish I bin wid em."

But we will leave the slave to his meditations, while we follow the footsteps of his master, whose present occupation, we may whisper in the reader's ear, contemplates equally his own and the affairs of the partisan cavalry under the command of Marion.

CHAPTER II.

WHELP AND DAM.

OUR people are hard riders, and a night canter through the forest is not held to be a very perilous or unpleasant necessity. It was with no concern that our horseman found the night settling down upon him as soon as he left the swamp. Nor did it occasion much concern that the darkness was coming on in cloud, and with a threat of storm. He looked up at the gloomy masses gathering in the south, without disquiet; and very slightly increased the speed of his charger by a slight shake of the bridle in his grasp.

We need not describe his ride, which was continued for some hours, his steed being allowed to vary his paces at times, and to subside finally, from a canter, into a good travelling trot.

His course lay across the country in the direction of the Santee. By nine o'clock he reached a ruined homestead—a tolerably ancient manor seat—where, by daylight, the traveller might readily perceive the proofs of former state and wealth. A great entrance, or carriage-way, of brick columns, still remained, opening upon a noble avenue of oaks. But the fences and gates were gone. Our horseman penetrated the avenue, which conducted to the site of what had been a noble mansion. It was now in ruins. The flames had done their work fully upon the edifice, which had been built of black cypress, upon a foundation of brick, raised some ten feet above the ground. The foundation and the chimneys alone remained. The ruin had been the work of tory hands, one of the thousand proofs, which the country everywhere afforded, of the terrible civil war which had now, for some years, prevailed in Carolina.

Our traveller sighed unconsciously as he passed the ruins which he could but imperfectly discern in the dim light of a few melancholy stars which shone out still among the imper-

fect cloud-drifts. His memory fully recalled the bitter pang which followed his first knowledge of the fate of the ancient homestead. The tall chimneys stood up against the sky, in the open area, like so many gloomy memorials of a tragic history—silent, but full of speech to his affections. But he rode on without pausing; his pace, indeed, a little accelerated, as if he aimed to lose the sight of objects which only brought him troubling thoughts. He passed through a ravaged garden in the rear; entered a wood which had been a pretty sylvan haunt of his youth; in the recesses of which he suddenly came upon a log-house, through the chinks of which a faint light now reached his eyes.

As he beheld it through the trees, he drew up his steed, alighted, and having fastened the reins to the first shrub-tree, he stole cautiously to the cottage entrance, and peeped silently through one of its several crevices. As if satisfied, by his survey, that he might proceed more boldly, he smote the door thrice with his sabre hilt. His voice seconded this application, and, after a brief delay, in which he exhibited more impatience than at any time during his whole ride, the door was opened to him. He had reached the place of shelter not a moment too soon. Big drops of rain were now beginning to ooze out from the trailing clouds above.

The salutation of the cottager—who came to the door in a partial undress, and bearing in his hand an inch of tallow candle, “*dipt*,” such as the poorer sort of people commonly used whenever they were ambitious beyond the light-wood torch—would seem to show that the new-comer had been expected.

“Well, major, I had a’most given you up. It’s pretty late, I reckon. I’d a sort o’ guess that you’d ’a been here last night; and I sot up for you till the biggest part of the night was gone. And when you didn’t come, all day, I was jubous something had happened. All’s well, I reckon?”

“Quite, Blodgit; quite as well as it can be at present. Still, we may hope that it may be better. But of this hereafter. Now, my good fellow, let us find a cover for my horse. How’s the corn and fodder?”

“Oh! enough, sir, and to spare a friend.”

“And an enemy, too, upon occasion, Blodgit.”

"How, sir,—an inimy!"

"Love your enemies, you know!"

"Oh! yes, sir; that's true; that's in the good book, but 'taint quite the law 'mong sodgers, I'm thinking. Sodgers, Major—"

"No matter now, about the soldiers, Blodgit; let us see to the horse." And the stranger moved from the cabin to where the beast was fastened.

"Never you mind him, major. *I'll* see to him."

"Thank you, Blodgit, but I prefer to see to him myself. My good 'Nimrod' might reasonably be displeased with me if I left him to the care of anybody but myself. Besides, it's a habit with me now, and I should not eat my own supper, or enjoy my own sleep, with any satisfaction, if I did not first see that he was put properly in the way for getting his. Do you lead the way to the stables, and shake down some fodder. No more words about it."

The words of the speaker, uttered with the air of one accustomed to command, were decisive, and the two proceeded together to the stables, which were pretty well shrouded in the wood, some hundred yards in the rear of the cabin. Here, the traveller stripped the animal of his furniture, and, in spite of Blodgit's urgent offers of service, rubbed him down himself.

"It's no wonder, major, that the beast loves you, and you're sich a horseman as you are. It stands to reason that he should love you, when you take sich care of him."

"Tumble in the fodder, Blodgit."

The latter obeyed. This done, the horseman added:—

"We will let him munch on that for a while. In half an hour, he must have thirty ears of corn. And now, a word in your ear, Blodgit. Having seen to the horse, look a little to his master, who, I can answer for it, has not had a bite since sunrise."

"You don't say so, major! Come along, sir, and we kin find you some cold bread and bacon. Ef you'd wait for it, we might even run down a chicken."

"Let the chicken run, Blodgit. The bread and bacon will answer every purpose."

They emerged from the stables together, and pushed hurriedly

for the cabin. The rain was now falling steadily. They had scarcely entered the hut and closed the door, when it came down in torrents; while the winds, suddenly rising, roared over the low, shingled roof, with the hoarse rush of the sea upon the shore. The traveller looked up with satisfaction, rubbing his hands as he spoke.

"I am fortunate in having saved my distance. How it pours!"

A woman's voice from an inner room answered his self-congratulation.

"Don't mind the pouring, major, when you're in the dry."

"Ah! old lady, are you still awake?" responded the traveller.

"Yes, indeed, major; old people don't sleep much; preticklarly when they're troubled with the rheumatiz."

"What! still sick—the old complaint?"

"Well, I'm always a-complaining. Pains in all my bones, preticklarly in wet weather. I kin hardly git about at all; and that's why I made Pete bring me down from the loft, for I couldn't be going up and down them troublesome steps, you know."

"To be sure—you were right, old lady. In your infirm condition that room is the proper place for you."

"So I told Pete. I'm all over infirmities. I kin do nothing hardly for myself now, and but one little negro gal to help me, and she so contrary. There's no keeping her awake, do and say what I will. You Jenny—Jenny!"

And the old woman began to bawl for the negro, whose snores were audible from the same chamber.

"Don't bother yourself about the gal," cried Blodgit. "What do you want, mammy? Let me do it."

The son, who had been busy spreading the supper-table, now proceeded to the apartment of the old woman.

"The physic bottle, Pete. It's in the cupboard."

"What! you will take physic, old lady?" asked the traveller, still speaking from the hall.

"What kin I do, major? I must take something for these pains, and this is a most famous physic. It cured old Betsy Dollard in three weeks, and she was much worse off than me. She had the rheumatiz, I don't know how many years."

"Well, I hope the stuff may cure you, old lady. But I have no faith in physic. It is quite enough to expect, if the patient does not die of it."

"Ah! major, you talk like a young man, as ef you was to be young always. But wait till you git old like me, and then you'll think there's nothing in the world like doctor's stuff."

"Heaven forefend!" exclaimed the traveller. "Commend me to bacon and hominy, egg and chicken, bread and milk—any farmhouse physic in preference to that of the doctor's shop."

The speaker, by this time, was slashing away at the fragment of a fitch, which stood before him.

"Some of this bacon now, Mrs. Blodgit," he cried aloud.

"Ah! ef I dared! But 'twould be the death of me, at night preticklarly."

"The life of you, rather," was the answer; the speaker shaving off a second slice of the meat, and doing prompt execution upon the corn hoe cake at the same time.

"Bread and bacon," he continued, "work like magic upon sick people. They have cured more desperate cases in one year, than physic has cured in a century. Bacon is a great medicine by itself. I've known of a hundred cures which it has made, taken internally; nay, the very smell of the meat, when it is warm, has a wonderful effect. There was one poor fellow, I remember, who was left for dead on the field at Blackstocks. We never dreamed of his having breath enough in him to keep a snail alive, and looked to bury him with the rest, as soon as we had finished dinner. But the moment the men began to eat, and the savor of the bacon reached his nostrils, he revived, begged for a morsel only, and has been a well man ever since. I don't know, indeed, but that he owes his escape from all bullets from that day, to the fact that he always feeds fully before he goes into battle. He keeps a thick streak of bacon between ribs and skin, and it turns off the bullets."

"Lord presarve me! Is it possible, major?"

"Possible! It is true, Mrs. Blodgit; and known to every trooper in Sumter's cavalry. The old Gamecock would have a fellow up at the halberds, in short order, who ventured to dispute it. Try a morsel, old lady, and you'll feel your pains the easier for it."

"Ef I thought so, major. But the doctor says—Doctor Blumenburg, you know—that, with my complaint, I should eat a'most nothing."

"And I say, that, with your complaint, it would be better were you to swallow Blumenburg himself, than his drugs."

"Oh! major, how kin you talk so?"

"Does he tell you what your complaint is?"

"No! that's true; he don't!"

"Well, I will! Your complaint is—*physic*!"

"Jest as I said, mother," put in Pete. "It's what I'm always a-telling her. I tells her that it's doctor's stuff and old age, together."

"Old age, Pete Blodgit! I wonder what you knows about it! Old age, indeed! I'm a young woman, major! I'd be young and spry as anybody, if 'twan't for the rheumatiz. Old age! Oh! Pete Blodgit, you're a most onnatural son for one born in a Christian country. Would you b'lieve it, major, but I warn't but a child—a ga'l of sixteen—when that *on*-natural cub was born; and for him to turn upon his mother, just like a heathen Philistine."

"Psho, mother, don't be foolish now!"

"Foolish! You oughtn't to say a word to me, Pete Blodgit, considering you didn't want to let me move my bed down sta'rs, though you know'd well enough how I was suffering up thar' in the loft!"

The son answered surlily:—

"There was no need for you to come down. The room's a good room up in the loft, and down here, you are only in the way."

"Only in the way! Oh! you sarpent! A good room, you say; and all littered up with kags and boxes."

"Littered! Yes, and who litters them? Tell me that? Tell the major now, ef you hain't got a hen a-setting now in every one of them kags and boxes."

"Jest hear him, the sarpent! Hens must set, major! It's the natur' of hens to set! But jest you ax him, major, ef he hadn't the onnatural heart to say I shouldn't come down sta'rs, to be in the way of his company."

"Company?" was the single word, uttered inquiringly by the guest, and he looked at Blodgit as if for explanation.

"You knows I has no company, mother," said the son, with a slight show of confusion, and some little impatience in his tone.

"Yes, you has, Pete; and too much for your own good. What's them men, that kept you a-drinking here, Friday night, for a'most three good hours; and then you went off with them, the Lord knows whar', for, I reckon, good two hours more. You were after no good, I reckon."

"Leaving you alone all that time, old lady?"

"Jest so, major; and me so mighty bad off with the rheumatiz."

"Ah! that rheumatiz! Try the bacon, Mrs. Blodgit. It was the bacon, and not the physic, that cured Mother Dollard. And so, Pete neglects you for his drinking associates; goes off with all sort of scapegraces, I suppose, and leaves you to suffer from your pains."

"That he does, major—"

"I hev' no company—I don't go off with nobody, major—"

"What, man! won't let your mother speak?"

"That's the how, major! He shets me up jest as fast as I open my mouth."

"A sure sign of a bad son, Mrs. Blodgit; but, perhaps, he had business with these people. You know, I sometimes send my men to him."

"Oh! 'twarn't none of *your* men, major—'twas—"

Pete Blodgit fidgetted.

"Mother, you'd better let me talk about the business, to the major, by ourselves."

The guest perceived the anxiety of the speaker; nor did the changed tone of voice, with which he spoke, escape the observation of the former. It had its effect upon the mother also. The old woman immediately resumed her complaints of the rheumatiz; and rambled off into a comparison of her pains with those of Betsy Dollard. The guest was placid, and did not seek to press the point upon which he was, nevertheless, somewhat curious. He contented himself with playing upon the old woman, in another way.

"Your case is certainly a hard one, Mrs. Blodgit. What

with the rheumatism, the girl, and your unnatural son, your life must be very wretched. Now I can cure you of all three of these evils. Fling your physic out of the window, and try the bacon; give the girl to any young woman who has *not* got the rheumatism; and, as for Pete, I will take the cure of him upon myself. He shall go with me to camp to-morrow, and see if our orderly can't put him into the harness of good behavior."

"What! send Pete to camp, major, and he a lame person too, that can't walk, as I may say."

"You forget; he walks off with those peep-o'-day boys—"

"Oh! that's only once in a way, major."

"His lameness doesn't hurt him as an overseer. It's a crook only, not a weakness. A horse may be hipshot, you know, yet good at draught."

"But Pete ain't a horse, major."

"No, indeed; ef I was, mother, you'd ha' driven me to my last legs long ago!"

"Thar' ag'in, you onnatural serpent!—" began the old woman, when the major interrupted her—

"You see, you can do nothing with a fellow so unkind and ungrateful. The camp's the only place to bring him to his senses."

"Oh! major, how you talk. Pete's a good son—thar' never was a better. He ongrateful and onkind?—tain't in him, major, to be onkind!"

"Yet he would have kept you up in that villanous loft, with the hens setting everywhere about you."

"Oh! Lord, major, for that matter I likes their company; and, as for the loft, it's not so bad a sleeping-place after all; and I'm old, and better out of the way up thar. Pete meant well, and I reckon, major, he was right all the time. Old people are apt to be onreasonable."

"But the bad company he keeps, old lady—the roystering night-stalkers, outlaws, and tories, for aught we know, who—"

"No! no! no tories, I'm sure! oh! major, Pete's one of the best friends of liberty in all these parts. Ef the men that comes to see him—only now and then—once a month, perhaps, not oftener—ef they wouldn't be a drinking here, for two hours at a stretch!—

"Shocking! and yet, would you believe it, your son, Pete, has not offered me a drop of Jamaica to take the salt of the bacon out of my throat."

"Why, Pete!" began the old woman, but the son, who had frequently shown himself restiff, and not unfrequently began the replies for his mother, now spoke quickly, and in tones somewhat louder than the occasion seemed to require—

"Mother, why will you be talking foolishness. You know very well that I keeps no liquor in the house—nara [neither] whiskey nor Jamaica; and when the men comes that you speak of, they brings their own liquor with 'em. You'll make the major b'lieve everything that's bad of me, and then he'll be turning me out of the house, and letting loose the tories upon me!"

The old woman whined from within, in assurances of her son's sobriety and virtue; and, with a smile upon his lips, the guest exclaimed—

"Say no more about it, old lady; your son, I suppose, is not unworthy of his excellent mother! And now, Master Pete Blodgit," he continued, speaking in lower tones, "lead the way to the hayloft. I'll take my sleep to-night in a bed of fodder."

"But it rains yit, major."

"Yes, I hear! But I am neither salt nor sugar, my good fellow; so lead the way!"

"Set down awhile, major, while I go, and brush up, and spread out the clean fodder—"

"Pshaw, man, do as I bid you," answered the stranger, laying his hands on the other's shoulder and looking him searchingly in the face. "I am a soldier, and accustomed to rough usage. Do not, by your prating, lead me to think that *your* usage has been too tender."

There was that in the glance of the stranger, beneath which the eyes of Pete Blodgit fell; there was something, too, in what the other said, which filled him with some misgivings. His dark swarthy features, under a stronger light than that of a "dipt" candle, would have shown themselves suffused with a deeper red than usual; and there was a tremor of his slight form, as the other laid hands upon his shoulder, which betrayed some lurking apprehensions. His consciousness was such, that,

for a moment, he did not venture to reply. He was about to light a bit of candle, ingeniously socketed in a huge calabash, pierced with little holes, the substitute for a lantern, and not a bad one either — when his companion arrested the movement.

“Take no light, Blodgit. Carry your flint and steel and the candle in your pocket! Good-night, old lady.”

“What, major, air you guine out into the weather?”

“Only to see if the rain has washed out all the stars.”

“Oh! major, you will be for poking fun at the old woman. It’s the way with you young ossifers.”

Our traveller had some good-natured answer to this, while Pete Blodgit was undoing the entrance of the cabin; but, while speaking, the back of the other being turned, he contrived to lay gently upon the floor at his feet, and just where he had been sitting, a memorandum pocket-book. His movement escaped the notice of the cottager, and, in a moment after, the two disappeared in the night together, taking their way once more in the direction of the stables.

CHAPTER III.

ROGUE IN GRAIN.

THE hay, or rather fodder-loft, which they sought, was above the stable. Entering this, the candle was lighted, and our traveller gave a look at his good steed. He was pleased to see that the beast pricked up his ears, and showed animation. Blodgit now supplied the trough with corn; and, this done, the two clambered up by a rude ladder into the loft above.

This great vaulted chamber was pretty well filled with fodder closely packed, clean, dry, well cured, and sweetly smelling. It offered a pleasant sleeping-place to the jaded traveller on a stormy night. It was ample enough; a house upon a house; high-roofed, with the square walls of the house running up above the floor some six feet, and forming, with the roofing, an apartment of considerable depth. The length and breadth fully corresponded with the height. The stables were calculated for the accommodation of fully thirty horses. At this moment, they contained that of our traveller only, and a stout hackney of Master Pete Blodgit. There was a single window at each end of the loft, through the crevices of which the light found its way usually with the dawn.

Our traveller had the precaution to conceal the candle by scooping out a space in the fodder piles, shrouding the gleams of the light, even so feeble as they were, from all possibility of being seen through the chinks of the building, by any chance passer on the outside. The two, now sitting down beside the candle, contributed still more effectually to the obscuration of it, which they seemed to desire. In this position the traveller began a conversation for which Pete Blodgit evidently waited with some disquiet.

“I take for granted, Blodgit, that you are wise enough, and

honest enough, to be sensible of the kindness and liberality with which you have been treated by my sister and myself, and to be faithful to her interests and mine. In this, as I have already tried repeatedly to show you, lay your own interest—nay, safety! I have secured you the forbearance of our own people, and suffer you to keep up appearances with the British. I intrust to you the property of my sister, and give you a liberal support out of it. Your policy is to be faithful, even if you lacked the honesty—”

“But I am honest, major! Who says I ain’t honest to you? I’d like to know! There’s no man what has a right to—”

“I wish to believe you honest, Pete; yet how is it that you suffer drunken and drinking visiters, and night-rufflers, to come about you? And who are these visiters? I hope you are not falling into bad company.”

“Lord, no! major; that’s jest the old woman’s talk; and she wouldn’t be an old woman, you know, ef she didn’t talk, and talk, about them things that she don’t onderstand. The people that come here, once or twice—and they was a-drinking set of fellows, I own—they were Marion’s men—”

“What were Marion’s men doing away from camp at this time?”

“Well, you see, he had let some of them come off, to see arter their famblies and their crops. They were some of the Baxters and Corries; young Tom Eigleberger, and Joe Purvis, and Dick Stairns, and some others, whose famblies live along the Edisto—”

“Enough of them, for the present! I am not satisfied that they have left camp with the general’s permission, and the less you have to say to them, the better.”

“Lord love you, major, it’s only once in a way I seed them; I reckon, before this time, they’re off to camp ag’in.”

“So much the better for you, as for themselves! and now for our accounts. How much powder and ball have you been able to pick up?”

“Mighty leetle, major. The redcoats are getting shy of parting with ammyntion. I don’t think I’ve been able to git more than thirty weight of bullets, and a leetle more than half that quantity of powder.”

"Any muskets?"

"Only three."

"How's this? Not one of my deputies but has been doing far better, in the time you've had. Ballou, alone, has been able to pick up more than forty weight of powder, thirteen muskets, and ninety-eight pounds of ball; besides sending thirteen Irish deserters into camp."

"Well, I can't say; but Ballou must be more in luck's way than me. I hain't had any chaine; besides, major, I've had so leetle money."

"How so? You've been selling corn and fodder, *I know!* I see even here, your pile has come down considerably! and how's the corn in the swamp fens?"

"Well, I hain't sold much, major. Mighty leetle, in fact—"

"Be sure, Pete Blodgit, of the truth of what you are about to tell me. I would not have you commit yourself. I would not wish to discharge you: but I will not be deceived; and I have the means of knowing. Speak out boldly, man, and in order to do so, be sure you speak nothing but the truth."

"Oh! to be sure, major; it's nothing but the truth that I'm guine to tell you! Now, you see, powder and shot is mighty scarce in these pairts. It's hardly to be had for love or money; and the money's scarce; for, though I hev' been selling a leetle provisions, yet, you see, the money you gits for it ain't always the right grit."

"You don't tell me, Pete Blodgit, that you've been taking continental money from the British, for my sister's corn and fodder."

"Well, you see, major, there warn't any help for it. Times ain't as they usen to be. Thar's no sich plenty of guineas now to be had, and sence the British hev' been a printing and counterfitting this continental paper, they're more likely to poke that into your fist than the yaller beauties."

The officer gazed sternly into the countenance of the other, whose eyes drooped slowly beneath his glance, as he sternly interrupted him—

"Why do you try to outwind me, Pete Blodgit, with this chatter about and about the truth. To the point, man. What corn and fodder have you sold, and what money have you got?"

"Well, major, don't be too rash now—jest let me count up and remember. Thar' was a matter of five loads of fodder that was tuk' away by that blasted squad of tories under Richebourg; and they wouldn't pay in nothing but the blasted paper."

"Why did you take it?"

"How could I help myself, major? They would ha' tuk' it anyhow."

"What! and you with Lord Rawdon's own protection in your pocket?"

"I wan't no use, major, with sich rapsCALLIONS as them. They jest laughed at the paper."

"Well—proceed!"

"Then thar' was Cappin' Creighton—"

"Regular service?"

"Yis—rigilars—but they paid *some* in continentals, and *some* in gould."

"How much gold?"

"I reckon, I had five guineas from him."

"Five guineas! well?"

"Then come Norris's dragoons, and they gin' me a leetle gold."

"How *much* gold?"

"Well, about five guineas more."

"That is ten, then, that you admit. How about Keene's squadron?"

"Oh! Keene—yes, I did sell some provisions to Cappin' Keene, and he paid me a leetle gold too; say three guineas."

"Thirteen! what more?"

"Well, I don't recollect, jest now, any more, major, 'cept—"

"Except what?"

"Except what our own people got. Thar' was Cappin' Rumph got some with your order; and Ville-Pontoux, and that rough customer, Wannamaker; all of them had your order, and didn't pay nothing."

"No matter about *them*. You mean to tell me, Blodgit, that you've got only thirteen guineas for me?"

"Hain't got that, in gould, major; for, you see, the powder and ball, and the three muskets, had to be paid for out of that."

"A moment, my good fellow. How many of the corn-bins are empty?"

"Oh! none empty, major . . . I hain't sold so much corn as that comes to."

"Ah, well! not sold so much corn! Stop a moment."

Here the stranger felt in his pockets.

"Where can my memorandum-book be? I must have left it, Blodgit, where I ate supper. I had it, certainly, before I sat down to table. Do run off to the house, and see after it; and, harkye, don't look into it, as it contains some private matters concerning the army."

The other eagerly rose, as if glad to escape the scrutiny which he had been undergoing; and, in a few moments, descended the ladder, and emerged from the stable, the door of which he locked behind him. The stranger smiled as he heard the bolt shot and the key withdrawn; and, rising stealthily, lantern in hand, he too descended, and proceeded at once to the stall where Blodgit's horse was fastened.

"Third stall from the right," he muttered to himself as he entered it; "three notches in centre-post, iron ring on top-post movable. Let us see—let us feel."

And, thus saying, he tried the post, which he readily found, and discovered that it was secured to the partition dividing one stall from another, by a single, but large screw—that it was nowhere *nailed* to the partition, and that it worked freely beneath his hand.

"So far, all promises to be true. The lying rascal! The ungrateful hound! But I will lay him utterly bare."

Having satisfied his curiosity in the stall, he secreted the lantern, drew a key from his pocket, and opened the door of the stable, carefully locked it, and withdrew the key; then stole off to the cabin, with a light, swift footstep, pursuing the route in the darkness, with the ease of one to whom it had been long familiar. The rain was still falling, but not heavily, and of this he seemed to take no heed. He passed to the rear of the building, and, through a crevice, was enabled to discern all the movements of Blodgit. The latter had already found the memorandum-book, but, in defiance of his instructions, was greedily turning over its pages, and reading its contents.

"Nothing here," he muttered, as he read; "nothing here, that I kin see, about the corn and fodder; but here's a mighty deal of information about Greene's army, and Marion's men, and Sumter's chickens, that I reckon Lord Rawdon would pay a pretty nice little amount in goulden guineas ef he could only read like me."

Suddenly, his mother, starting out of sleep, called to him from within: "Pete—Pete Blodgit—that you?"

He started with a shiver—the convulsion of guilt and fear—thrust the book hastily into his bosom, and strode, without answering, toward the door. She called again.

"That you, Pete?"

"Yes, it's me."

"What's the matter, Pete?"

"Matter enough. Here's the major a wanting to drean all the money out of me. I'd as leave he'd drean me of all the blood in my body."

"I'd drean *his* first, Pete Blodgit. I'd never let him hev' the gould that I hed once fairly got into my own hands. Come here to me, Pete, and let me tell you what you're to do."

"I kain't now! He's a waiting for me."

"Well, you're but a poor-sperited creature, ef you let him drean you of a copper. I'd draw a knife for it, Pete, I would!"

"Hush up: who knows but I may!"

"Amiable couple!" muttered the stranger, as he listened without; "and this, great God, is human nature; in a Christian land; where no house is without its Bible; where no precinct is without its preacher! Here is a mother, on the verge of the grave, counselling her own son to murder, for a paltry sum of gold! And these are people for whom I have found shelter and protection—whom I have kept from starvation—whom I still feed, and to whom I have given the very servant to whom they look for help and water!"

But there was no time for soliloquy. Pete Blodgit was already about to undo his door, and the stranger stole away swiftly in the direction of the stable. Here he housed himself, ascending once more to the fodder loft, and resuming his place quietly, as he heard the key of the other slowly turning in the lock.

"You were long in finding it, Pete," said the guest, as Blodgit handed him the book.

"'Twas hard to find, major, as I hed to feel for it:—I hed no light, and did't want to wake the old woman to git the one she hed."

"Well, as you had no light, I needn't ask you whether you read anything in the book."

"It's mighty little skill I hev' in reading, any how; but you tell'd me not, you know."

Meanwhile, the stranger turned over the pages of the book; then, slowly speaking, he said:—

"Pete Blodgit, I have tried to favor you, but you will not let me. I warned you to speak the truth to me, but you have been deaf to the warning. Now, hear what *I know*. You have sold both cattle and provisions to Coffin's commissary, of which you have not told me a syllable."

"Oh! but he paid in continental currency, major."

"Not so, sir! He paid you in guineas, sir, forty-seven guineas, all of which were counted out into your own hands."

The fellow was dumb—his eyes dilated to a marvellous wideness—his lips quivered—his teeth almost chattered; but he could not deliver a syllable! The other gave him no respite.

"You sold to Fisher, also, and got your pay in gold—a matter of nine guineas:—but here, look over that list for yourself; and say what other items might be set down, which are *not* there, but which ought to be taken into count against you!"

The criminal took the paper mechanically, and, while the perspiration rolled down his face and forehead, he *seemed* to peruse the document. When he had done, the other said:—

"Now hand over to me all the money you've got."

Blodgit drew a leathern sack from his bosom which he delivered with some alacrity into the hands of the major. The latter untied it, spread his handkerchief, and poured out the contents, which he deliberately counted.

"Thirteen guineas, it seems; and this continental stuff?"

"Four thousand three hundred and thirty-five dollars!" Blodgit uttered the amount sonorously.

"Well remembered. Now, Blodgit, where's the twenty-five

dollars you received in Spanish silver from Corporal Rickarts of the Hessian yagers?"

"Silver—Spanish dollars—O! major, I quite forgot that. I gin that to the old woman to keep. I'll go and git it right away."

"Nay, leave it with her! But how comes it, Blodgit, that this small balance is all that remains of the amount you have received?"

"Well, but, major,—there's the continental paper."

"None of that nonsense, Blodgit, will impose on me! Where's the gold?"

"And you forget, major, what I had to pay for the muskets, the powder and balls."

"Ah!—and where are they?"

"Thar! under the fodder in that corner."

"Good. Is the powder in kegs?"

"No, major, in sheep-skins and bladders; and tied up in two cends of a salt-bag."

"It is dry, then, and in convenient form for removal?"

"Oh! yes!"

"And this is all the money that you have?"

"It dreans all the blood out of me, major. I hain't got another shilling, 'cept the Spanish dollars that I gin the old woman to keep."

"You would no doubt be grateful to any person who should show you that there was still some money left, both in gold and silver?"

"As I'm a living sinner, Major Sinclair, I hain't got two sixpences to rub ag'in each other. I swow!—"

"Stop, man! Don't rivet the chains of the devil about your soul by an oath!"

"What do you mean, major?"

"I'll show you, my good fellow, in a moment," said the other, gathering up the money, and returning it to the leathern wallet, which he deposited quietly in the body of his coat. This done, he said:—

"Take up the lantern!"

The fellow obeyed, and led the way, as his superior directed, to the ladder, both descending to the stable. Here Sinclair pointed to the stall containing the overseer's beast.

"Put your horse into another stall." It was done in silence. Blodgit obeyed, tremblingly, in all things.

"Unscrew me that post."

"Why, it's nailed down fast, major."

"Unscrew, unscrew!" The fellow submitted.

"Now pull up the post!"

"Why, major, it's onpossible, unless we dig. It's sunk deep in the airth."

"Try it!"

The fellow *appeared* to try, but the post *appeared* still to remain immovable. Sinclair approached it, passing the lantern into the hands of Blodgit. He then grasped the post with a single hand. As he did so, the light flickered — Blodgit having reached forward his right hand to the trough against which leaned an oaken billet. But whether he designed to grasp it or not, and for what purpose, must be only matter of conjecture, for, in that very moment, Sinclair turned full upon him, and clapped a pistol to his head.

"I tell you, hold the lantern! Make a movement, to the right or the left, and I blow your brains out."

The fellow fairly shivered, but he made out to stammer:—

"Why, major, what's the trouble? What em I doing?"

"Enough, Pete Blodgit, that I know you! Hold that lantern steadily. Beware!"

With this speech—as if satisfied of his securities—he deigned not another word, or look, to the fellow; but, with a single hand, tore up the post from the spot where it seemed to be firmly planted in the earth. This act required no effort, the post having been maintained in an erect position simply by the single screw—a large one indeed—which had fastened it to the partition.

"Leave the stall! Go to the next and hold your lantern over," was the stern command of his visiter, in tones that coerced the will of the listener. Blodgit obeyed in silence, while Sinclair, stooping to the hole left by the post, drew up an old powder-keg by a rope-hitch, which had been made about it.

"You are surprised, Mr. Pete Blodgit, at my discovering golden treasures where you had none," said Sinclair, as, with

the muzzle of his pistol, he knocked in the head of the keg, and laid bare its contents. Blodgit groaned aloud as the other poured out the guineas into a great belt which he had drawn from his bosom, and now strapped about his body.

"Why do you groan, man! Ought you not rather to rejoice at my good fortune?"

The other groaned again.

"Pete Blodgit," said Sinclair, "your gnawing avarice has made you a rogue and a traitor. Were I to serve you rightly, I should abandon you to your fate;—nay, have you hung to the first swinging bough! But you are sufficiently punished by the loss of your ill-appropriated treasure. Now hear me. I have an eye upon you, and no trust in you! My spies shall watch you. I shall give you *one* more trial. Do you try and be faithful! I shall leave in your hands the corn and fodder still, to be sold out as it is called for. I shall leave you the negro-girl to help your mother as before. You have the hogs, the cattle, and the poultry; and a cover over your own heads. Be faithful!"

Blodgit fell upon his knees.

"Oh! Lord, major, have mercy upon me! It was the old woman that tempted me!"

"Silence, rascal, and say nothing of your mother! I doubt if she knows of your proceedings. It is the bad company you have kept, sirrah, your own gnawing avarice, your own corrupt heart, that have led you to sin! Away, now!—not a word—and rout me up at daylight. I will then give you my further instructions. Take the light with you, and begone!"

The culprit did not wait a second order. He dashed out; and Sinclair heard him shoot the bolt and draw out the key, and fancied that there was a deliberate something in the way of his doing it, that spoke for a secret satisfaction, in the thought of the fellow, which seemed to give him consolation even after his losses. The other smiled scornfully, however, and muttered:—

"Rascal! He thinks he has me fast till morning! But I will teach him another lesson. Does he suppose me silly enough to have faith in him, after I have found him out—after I have stripped him of his stolen treasures—after I have shown

him that I *know* him ! No ! no ! master Blodgit ; I only stroke the cat's fur until I can get beyond reach of her claws ! There is work to be done before morning ! Were I to linger till peep of day, I should never see another. The scamp would soon have a score of his Jamaica-seekers busy with their knives about my throat. I must try and keep it sound for sweeter customers."

CHAPTER IV.

HOW TO TRAIN A CAT INTO A TIGER.

WE are not sure that all rascals have a like share of sensibility with Master Pete Blodgit, and exhibit the same degree of mortification upon detection. We do not, indeed, pretend to say that Pete's mortification was the result of any peculiar sense of shame; and are half inclined to suspect that he would not have cared a button about the exposure of his short-comings, and dubious reckonings, with his employer, had the other not shown himself so exacting—so tenacious about his returns, and so pressing and so punctilious in respect to immediate restoration. That discovery of the hiding-place of his treasure, held to be so perfectly secure—*that* was the crowning misery and mortification, that sent Pete to his wigwam, almost howling with fury. A sneaking, cur-like scoundrel naturally, his vexation, under this affliction, was such as to sublime itself to rage; and he felt, for a moment, almost disposed to put on the armor of heroism, and boldly grapple with the insolent assailant who had so suddenly dispossessed him of his accumulated spoils.

But Pete was not by nature endowed to be a hero. He might have brained Sinclair with his bludgeon, and probably would have tried to do so, had the opportunity been allowed him—as we half suspect was his intention, at the moment when his secret treasure was discovered;—but, to brave the enemy boldly, with naked weapon, front to front, and eye looking into eye, was by no means the course of action which Pete was prepared either by nature or education to attempt.

But he could rage fiercely, the danger not present—nay, resolve terribly in the moment of security—and his wrath burst forth into a perfect yell, when he found himself fairly within his cabin, with the door fastened behind him. He dashed the lantern down upon the table, and smote the table itself with a

heavy fist, while groan after groan broke from his breast, the proof of that terrible avarice which filled his heart, and which had been thus deprived of all its accumulated provision, "at one fell swoop!"

His mother, who was naturally wakeful, and whom the previous communication of the son had rendered anxiously so, now cried to him from within:—

"Well, Pete, you hain't given up the gould?"

"Hain't I then? Hell! what could I do?"

"What, all? You don't say all?"

"Every copper! I'm *dreaned* of every button!"

"I'd ha' died first!" responded the venerable rheumatic. "I'd ha' tried knife and bullet for it, before I'd ha' let myself be dreaned of all my hard yairnings by any man that ever broke bread. But I always told you, you was a mean-speritted critter! What's a man good for, ef he won't stand a fight for his yairnings?"

"Oh! hush, I say, mother! You don't know! How em I to stand up to a fair fight, me a lame pusson, and a small pusson to boot, with sich a powerful man as Willie Sinclair? You know it's all nonsense to talk so."

"Who talks of a fair fight, but your own fool-head? I knows well enough you'd be nothing in the hands of Willie Sinclair, ef he know'd what you was a-driving at. But you've had chainece enough of doing the thing without any fight at all! Whar' was your eyes, your hand, your knife, when he was a-eating, or a-lying down, or a-counting out the money, or looking over his papers? Lord! ef it hed been me, I reckon I could ha' found a hundred chaineeces for laying him over the head with a hickory, or driving a sharp knife cl'ar down into his ribs. Thar's always chaineeces enough for any man that's got a man's heart in his buzzom, Pete Blodgit! But you ain't no man at all, as I've told you a thousand times. Ef you was a man, 'twouldn't all now stand as it is; and Willie Sinclair wouldn't git off with that gould, though he's got it in his pocket, as you say. Thar's many ways for spiling a man's marching, ef thar' was only a man ready to chock the wheels, or cut the traces."

"Well, hush, now, mother. 'Tain't all over yit, as you say; and I'm a-thinking how I shall work it."

"Oh! much good your thinking will do you, Pete, ef you does it all by your own self. Come in here to me, and we'll talk it over together. It makes me strain my throat too much to talk to you out thar'. Come in, I say! Lord! ef I was only a man!"

"I wish you was!" sullenly responded the son, as he passed into the chamber.

"Set down thar'—'longside of me on the bed, Pete—set down! And, now, tell me all about it, Pete. You say he tuk' the whole thirteen guineas, and gin' you nothing?"

"Thirteen guineas! Lord! ef that was all!—it was nigh on to a hundred guineas that he dreaned out of me! It was!"

"The Lord ha' marsy upon my poor soul! And you let any man sweep you clean, of nigh on to a hundred guineas, and you never struck a stroke?"

"Well, you needn't go on a-saying the same foolish thing over and over ag'in, as ef I had no feelin's!" growled the fellow impatiently.

"And I wonder what's the sarvice sich feelin's as yours are a-guine to do any free white man? Ef the right feelin's was in your buzzum, you'd a dreaned his heart's blood, afore he'd ha' dreaned your pockets!"

"Oh! you needn't talk, neither; we'll see what you're a-guine to say and to do, when he comes at you in the morning for that bag of silver dollars I gin' you to put away."

"What! you didn't tell him of them dollars, too, did you?" almost screamed the old woman.

"How could I help it? He know'd all about it! He know'd everything!"

"And how kim he to know?"

"From the devil himself, I reckon; for I kain't guess how he found out everything, even to the kag of guineas in the stable."

"And a pretty place to hide a kag of guineas! Oh! Pete Blodgit, ef you was a born ediot you couldn't ha' done a more foolish thing!"

"Well, we'll see how you'll hide away them dollars when he comes for 'em in the morning."

"And you're a-guine to let him see morning shine, you poor-

sperrited, mean critter! You'll let him drean me, too, of all the leetle bit of money I've put away ag'in bad weather?"

"Well, it's his own money—that is, it's his sister's, which is the same thing, you know."

"And what do I care for him, or his sister? What's in my pocket's mine, I tell you; and I'll hold on to it, as I would to dear life, I tell you! He's a fool that lets himself be bled to death, and dreaned of all his yairnings, when there's a way to stop the drean."

"Ha! that's it! How will you stop the drean? Jest let me know what you'll say and do to save them Spanish dollars?"

"Ef you was the right sort of man, you'd be doing without axing me. But, as you ain't, I'll tell you. Oh! ef I was a man, I wouldn't waste words on you nor him! I'd do it myself, and nobody'd be the wiser of what was done till it was too late to put in with a 'stop you thar!' Look you, Pete Blodgit, I kin hardly lift a leg, therefore 'tain't possible for me to do nothing; but you—you must pluck up heart, Pete, and jest do as I tell you."

"Git on—quick! You're a-burning daylight!"

"Well: you've a gun! Ain't thar' a way to shoot through the logs?"

"Not easy! Besides, in all them blades, thar's no saying in jist what place he sleeps."

"Then you must knife him as he sleeps!"

"Easy enough, ef you could git at him without waking him. But that's the trouble. While you're a-working your way at him, he mayn't be taking it easy."

"And kain't you sneak like a cat, ef you kain't fight like a tiger. Kain't you git into the stable, boy, without *screaking* the lock as it turns, or the door on its hinges? You've got the key, and you've got the feet and cunning of a cat!"

"Ay, the key's safe"—and he drew it from his pocket—"and he's safe, too, till morning."

"Good! And so you git into the stable, and creep up into the loft, and feel about, softly, as any kitten, and jest you make sure when you go to stick!"

"He'll wake for sartin! The fodder's all about, and it will rustle."

"No! no! he won't wake! He's pretty well tired down by his riding. I know'd it from his talk, and he said as much. He'll sleep sound like a bag of feathers, I tell you, the moment he lays himself down for it. But jest you take your time, and feel your way, and be up and doing, with a heart that's all the time a-telling you—'Pete, don't you lose them guineas!' Giminie! a'most a hundred! And you hed a'most a hundred guineas, you mean-sperrited critter, and never let your own mother know a word about it?"

"Oh! hush about all that, mother! The thing now is how to git 'em back."

"Hev'nt I told you? Go you now, and set about it. Do it as I tell you. You were a born sneak, and ought to be able to crawl up, and feel where his heart beats, and drive your knife down hard like a hammer."

"I won't try the knife. I hev' pistols; good ones, too, with mouths like bulldogs; and a pair half-ounce bullets in 'em both."

"The knife's safest, Pete! Git your heart up! That's what you want! Only a leetle more of the tiger, and less of the cat, and Willie Sinclair wouldn't ha' seen the shine of them guineas, and won't carry 'em off, now he's got 'em!"

"I'll take both—knife and pistols! But I'm deuced jubous about it, mother. Ef I miss, and he should wake, he'll chop me to sausage-meat in a twink!"

"What! and you with two pistols in your gripe?"

"Yes! ef I had twenty! He's got something that I wants, mother, and what makes a fighting-man."

"It's the heart, Pete! But you've got a heart for the guineas, and a man ought to fight for the thing he loves! A'most a hundred guineas! Pete Blodgit, ef you let's Willie Sinclair git off with them hundred guineas, I'll cut your heart out! I will! Go! sneak upon him, and dig into his ribs ontill you hear the rattle in his throat! Never stop digging till you hear him gurgle out his last! It's for a hundred guineas, you know!"

And clutching the fellow by the wrist, with a savage energy, as she spoke, she drew him toward her with one hand, while with the other she smote him upon the breast, as if to show him the exact manner in which the deed was to be done. Pete wondered at the sinewy grasp which the old woman still pos-

essed, and could not forbear murmuring—an equal acknowledgment of his own feebleness and her strength of will—“Ah! mammy, ef I only had sich a heart as your’n in my buzzum!”

“Ah! Pete, but I was a she-tiger one time! Your daddy know’d it well. He warn’t no coward neither, Pete; yet many a times he said to me—‘Polly, you ought to have been a man and a sodger!’ and, the Lord knows, I ought! But you’ve got heart enough, Pete, ef you’ll only trust to it! You’re afeard of your own heart, now; and that’s bad, bekaise it keeps you from trying! But jest you try now, Pete, and mind and do it as your old mammy tells you! Snake it into the stable, and up the loft, and go on snaking it tell you feel jest where’s he’s a-lying; then put it to him, quick and hard! Only be sure and feel first where ta stick. Go now, quick, and do it! Do it, I say! or don’t you let me see that face of your’n ag’in!”

“I’ll do it!” exclaimed the son, starting up with a show of resolution which delighted the old woman, and encouraged the wretch himself.

“Do it, Pete, like a man! and while you’re a-doing it, I’ll be a-praying for you, Pete—your mother will be praying for you, Pete! Never forgit, when the time comes for you to strike, that there’s a hundred guineas depending upon it, in the dead man’s pocket!”

The promise to pray for him, while he sped on his devout mission, seemed very much to encourage our young Christian; since he now began to move with a greatly increased show of determination and energy. He examined his pistols, felt the charge with the ramrod, picked the flints, saw to the priming, then stuck the weapons in his girdle. His *couteau de chasse*—for Pete was a hunter, equally of hogs and deer—he subjected to as careful a scrutiny; and, satisfied with his tools, he threw open his door in order to proceed to work; but closed it again, quick as lightning, with an exclamation of surprise, if not apprehension—

“What’n the name of old Billzebug can that be a-coming!”

Let us leave him for a brief space, while we see to other parties in this our history, from whom we may also learn the cause of Master Blodgit’s surprise.

CHAPTER V.

THE HELL-FIRE DICKS.

WE have seen that Willie Sinclair had his doubts respecting the virtue of the good people inhabiting the cottage, though he could not exactly conjecture in what particular mode it was destined to be exercised in respect to himself. His precautions, however, were so taken as measurably to prepare him for any of the peculiar processes of Master Blodgit. Scarcely had the latter disappeared with his light into the cottage, than our hero proceeded to *his* preparations.

The first step was to put his good steed into harness. Nimrod was not quite satisfied with the performance, but he was docile; and only showed his dissatisfaction by a more rapid demonstration upon the ears of corn still remaining unmunched in the trough. He sought thus to provide against the necessity of soon departing from pleasant pastures;—a lesson of forethought which the war-horse and soldier acquire with singular and equal aptitude; and, while his master clapped on saddle-cloth and saddle, he buried his head deep in the trough, with a dogged resolution to keep it there just as long—as he was permitted. He did not exactly anticipate the sort of duty he was to perform, or the burden he was to carry; but he had old experiences of the rough usages of war; and he was one of those philosophical horses that always prepare for the worst, and meekly resign themselves to what they can not resist.—Not that he was a beast wanting in spirit! See him on a charge, and there could be no doubt about his blood. But your generous bloods are always most gentle; and docility is one of the best proofs of the longest-lived courage, whether in man or beast.

Sinclair patted Nimrod's shoulders affectionately, and left him saddled and bridled, but unbitted, still munching with head in

the trough. The trooper next went above, and brought down from the loft the sack of powder, the muskets and bullets, which Blodgit had stored away. The performance, carried on entirely in the dark, was necessarily a somewhat slow one: but Sinclair knew the precincts well; and, being equally cool and prompt, he contrived to do the work in the least possible period of time. The powder, alone, did he strap upon the steed. The muskets and bullets he carried forth—using his pass-key to emerge from the stable—into the contiguous woods, some two hundred yards from the stable, where he hid them in the hollow of a tree;—the route to which he pursued with little difficulty—like one accustomed—in spite of the darkness which hung heavily over the scene. A few handfuls of the bullets, alone, did he sling upon the crupper of his horse.

“What with my weight, Nim,” quoth he, addressing his steed—“a round hundred and fifty at least—this goodly pouch of guineas, some twenty weight of powder, and a few pounds of ball, you have something to carry besides your provender, old fellow!—but two hours will suffice—two hours.”

And he stroked the mane of the beast affectionately, slipped the bridle over his neck, now bitted him, and satisfied himself, by a nice examination, that his preparations were all complete. This done, he stole forth once more from the stable, and took his course toward the dwelling of Blodgit and his dam. All *seemed* to be quiet in that quarter, and, whether it was that Blodgit had concealed his light, or extinguished it, no gleam was apparent through the crevices of the cabin. Satisfied now that he might bring out his horse in safety, Sinclair returned to the stable and did so.

The beast offered no objections, and did not even exhibit the reluctance which we are very sure he felt. His master did not mount, but led the animal, with shortened rein, around the stable; then struck for the woods above, by a course which carried him as far as possible from the house. His object was to gain the road without alarming the senses of the overseer.

He had proceeded, in this cautious manner, about a hundred yards, when he fancied that he heard a cry, and a sound of voices, brought up by the night wind.

He paused to listen. The rain had ceased to fall, the wind

was freshening, a few stars began to peep out, through certain rents, here and there, in the "blanket of the dark," and the prospect was that of a clear morning. Still, the atmosphere was sufficiently damp to form a good medium for the transmission of sound, and the rising breeze favored the conveyance. The cries were repeated; and Sinclair was now satisfied that they issued from human throats.

He hurried his steed onward, still leading him, until he had increased the space between himself and Blodgit's wigwam to some three hundred yards; then, hiding the animal in a thick bit of wood, not more than fifty yards from the roadside, he coolly took his way back alone toward the cottage, to which the sounds continued to approach from below. They proved to be the shouts of men, doubtless half drunk, who, as they rode, shrieked and yelled like mad;—and the heavy tramp of their horses could be heard mingling with their cries.

The quick, intelligent mind of Sinclair readily conceived the approaching parties to belong to that gang of idle, and, no doubt, outlawed persons, of whom good Mrs. Blodgit had unwittingly revealed her son's knowledge; and the major of dragoons silently congratulated himself on having so seasonably left the stable. But he did not, for this, conceive the necessity of immediate flight. On the contrary, it became a good soldierly policy, just at this juncture, to see who these people were. He relied for his security on his own precautions;—on the fact that he could not be tracked during the darkness, and with so much water on the ground. Besides, not being supposed by Blodgit to have left the stable, he held a position of great vantage, which made large odds in his favor, in the event of that worthy designing any evil against him. Accordingly, he continued to press on toward the cottage, keeping his person covered, wherever he could, by the trees—of each of which he seemed to possess an individual knowledge. He finally made his way so closely to the cabin that a few steps, at any moment, would bring him to any quarter of it.

It was just at this moment, that Pete Blodgit, having worked up his courage to the striking, or rather to the sticking point, under the counsels of his virtuous dam, was preparing to go forth, pistols at girdle and knife in hand, in the direction of the

stable. But Pete's courage was not of a very certain quality. He had reached the door of his wigwam, and opened it, when his ears were saluted by the distant shoutings which had startled Sinclair.

"What can that be?" he muttered, instinctively reclosing the door. Another shout, more distinct, showed the cries to be approaching.

"It's 'Hell-fire Dick,' by the pipers, and I reckon he's got Skin-the-Serpent and Yallow Janders along with him."

The shouts now reached his mother's ears.

"Pete! Pete!" she cried, "there's your fellows, now, and they're just come in time to spile your sport. May the devil take 'em who sent 'em!"

"To spile it!—no, indeed! They've come to help! I reckon Willie Sinclair kain't git off from the gripe of Hell-fire Dick."

The cowardly heart of Pete Blodgit, which had begun to shrink already at the thought of the encounter he might have with Sinclair, suggested to him an alliance with the ruffian he had named, for the better execution of the task which he himself feared to perform. But the shrewder avarice of the old woman conceived, in a moment, all the dangers of such an alliance.

"You're a born fool, Pete Blodgit, ef ever there was one! and when 'Hell-fire Dick' settles with Willie Sinclair, who's guine to make Hell-fire Dick settle with you? Do you reckon on him giving up any of the gould to you, ef so be he does all the work?"

"But I ain't guine to let him do all! I'll git him to help me, and I'll let him have a share."

"What sort o' share will he give you? A guinea out of the hundred! No! no! Pete:—you don't want no help to settle a sleeping man! Snake it yourself, Pete; and don't ax for any help. Don't let Hell-fire Dick and the other fellows know that Willie Sinclair is here. Git 'em off as soon as you kin, and then do it all by yourself. Give 'em the rum that they're a coming after; for I know you've got a kag, though you did swear to the major that you hadn't a drop——

"And I hadn't *for him!*"

"Right enough! He warn't the person to be told what you hed. Let these chaps hev' the liquor, and say nothing about the cost; and ax 'em for no money, and hide the cards out o' sight, and don't offer to play; but jist you git 'em off as soon as you kin, and hurry to the business by your *one* self. Ef you kin git your own heart strong for it, Pete, the work is easy enough. But you're so mean-sperited. You've no more heart for anything than a possum. Oh! ef I was a man!—or ef I wasn't jist the same as tied down to the floor by this cussed rheumatiz, I'd never let one of them gould guineas go out of that fodder loft, 'cept with my consenting."

The shouting visiters were now at the entrance. The virtuous couple were silent, waiting the summons for admission. Three or four horses galloped heavily up to the wigwam, and with shout, and whoop, and yell, and halloo, Hell-fire Dick smote upon the door.

"Hello, in thar, Pete Blodgit! Up with you, my yaller chicken, and let's see ef you've got over the pip yit! Open to the sky-scrapers, and the bouncing wild cats; and hear 'em scream to beat all nater! Whoo! whoo! whoo! whoo!—

"We are the lads o' the morning,
That are off by the peep o' day;—
And we never take any warning
To be off, when the work is play."

"We are the beautiful sinners of salvation, and don't care for the man that prays. Let's in, Pete! Open, little fellow, or we'll make your clapboards fly! 'Twon't take much to give your cabin a slant! What 'say, boys—won't a back-and-rush of the nags do it? Whoo! whoo! open, I say!"

And bang, bang, upon the door, went the repeated blows from whip and bludgeon; a perfect storm-chorus of shout and song, and oath and "hellaballoo," echoing the glib speech of the fiery leader of the gang.

"Hello, out thar! What's the mischief? Who's to come in?" was the response of Pete from the house, spoken drawlingly, with several yawns between, as if he had been roused from sleep.

"Open to the devil and all his imps!" was the yell. "He's come a'ter you at last! You've had a honey time, my chick-

en! Time's up! Hev' to go, lad. No git off now. Hell's hot! Don't keep your master waiting! Open, I say! Whoo! whoo! whoop! Hurrah for old Horny!"

And Pete was fain to undo the door in short order, to save it from the blows which thundered upon it, and threatened to drive it from bolt and hinges. Scarcely had the valves parted, Blodgit showing himself at the entrance, when his shoulders were saluted with a smart stroke of Hell-fire Dick's whip, laid on with unction, once, twice, thrice!

"The devil smacks sweet and close, Honey Pete," cried the desperado, as he flung himself recklessly from his horse into the hall; never once heeding the angry cry which Blodgit gave under his sharp infliction. Three other fellows followed the example of their leader, darting in with shout and scream, and flinging their bridles to the victim.

"Hitch 'em, Pete; or, better take 'em to the stable, and fling 'em down some fodder. We'll make a short night of it with you. Hitch 'em first to a swinging limb, and let's have some Jamaica to take the taste of this all-fired rainwater out of our skins. Be spry now, my chicken, and don't keep a gentleman devil a-waiting on your tarrapin motions."

The old woman groaned aloud from within—groaned to make them hear.

"What the blazes does the old woman grunt about! Hello, in thar, mammy! what's the trouble in your intrails, that you give out so tremenjus?"

"Trouble enough, you rapscallions, when such tear-devils as you comes about one's house. I wish you was all in the bottom of the infarnal pit where you're bound for. Git along with you now, and leave a poor sick body in peace, won't you? Thar's no rum here, I tell you; thar's nothing here to make you stay."

"En' I'd like to see what there is to make us *go!*" growled back one of the ruffians, whom they knew by the *nom de guerre* of "Skin-the-Serpent."—"Shet up, most respectable old lady, and no matter what you do, don't forgit to go decent. A civil tongue in your head will be all the better of a sick woman. As for no rum, we'll see that Pete Blodgit looks jest where he knows to find it!"

"Ef he don't, we'll find him wanting!"

"Yes, indeed! and whar' will he be then? We know a trick or two, old lady, to convart your son into a puncheon, and make the red liquor run from him as free as water from the cloud. Ho! Pete, gi's another candle here. Thar's no seeing how beautiful you air, by this cussed spitting dip. Whoop! Hoss, be spry ef you wouldn't hev' another devil's smack jest on the shoulders whar' it's already raw."

Blodgit obeyed in all things like a beaten hound. He knew his masters. They knew their slave. They drove him hither and thither, finding him ceaseless employment, until they were fully engaged upon the rum, which, by this time, he had paraded upon the table.

Around this each ruffian took his place. Tin cups formed their only drinking vessels. The rum was scarcely mingled with water, dashed only, as it were, apologetically. The two tallow-candles, which smoked and spate, rather than burned upon the board, enable us sufficiently to survey the group which better lights might only have shown to be too hideous for inspection.

"Hell-fire Dick"—he had lost the proprietorship of any more Christian name—presided; his visage, scarred and savage, fully justifying the title which he bore. His eyes were great and rolling, owl-like, in a broad but degraded forehead. The black hair came down over cheeks and neck, worn long to conceal some horrid scars. His lips had been split by stroke of sabre. His teeth projected, very white, like enormous spades. They were his pride; and he claimed to be as powerful in the gripe of his jaw, as in that of the fist. He was a stout and swarthy giant—short, thick, with bull-dog figure and figure-head—and a neck, as he himself was apt to boast, quite too short for a rope. Yet, the monster wore a signet-ring—whence got, Heaven knows, garnished with skull and cross-bones for crest. It became his deeds. He was one of those scoundrel-pirates of the land—like the pirates of the sea, in a previous century—who exulted only in the terrors they inspired. He was a notorious outlaw, one of the few surviving Scophilites—a banditti, which, at the opening of the revolutionary discontents in Carolina, had carried crime and terror to many a happy homestead.

It would be useless to inquire after the birthplace of such a monster. The earth always breeds such in seasons of civil war. The first we hear of Joel Andrews—afterward “Hell-fire Dick”—was in Florida. He passed thence through Georgia to Carolina—was driven out as an outlaw—sought refuge again in Florida, and returned to Carolina, as a loving loyalist, as soon as the British arms had acquired the ascendancy in that province.

Sam. Brydone, *alias* “Skin-the-Serpent,” “Rafe Brunson,” or “The Trailer,” and “Joe Best,” were the three companions of “Hell-fire Dick.” They were creatures of the same kidney, though of humbler rank as rascals. They never refused to follow where Dick led; but they were not the persons to lead while he was to be found. Still, it would be doing great wrong to their abilities to say, that, were he lost to the fraternity, each of them would not be possessed of the necessary faculty to carry on the enterprising business in which they commonly engaged—not to fight exactly, but to gather spoils from those who did, was their vocation. They were the vultures in the track of armies—the jackals in the wake of the lion! They were quite free to fight, nevertheless; but never for mere fun. Theirs was a tolerably cool calculation of what was to come of it, before they crossed steel, or lifted rifle. Now, we may say, their purpose, in the visit to Pete Blodgit, was a mere carouse; to drink, game, swear, sing, howl, or shout away the hours—nothing more. They were, just at this moment, in their most amiable phase. In seeking Pete Blodgit’s wigwam, they anticipated nothing more than a night of debauchery; the worthy Pete, who, on several scores, enjoyed a sort of virtuous immunity with both parties, using his reputation as an innocent man, in driving various pretty little practices, for debauching the troops of both armies, and plucking what pigeons, of either side, he could safely manage. He contrived to get supplies of rum and sugar—lemons occasionally—from Charleston, by the heads of Cooper river; and had certain comely associates, in the garri-son, who wore, without openly discrediting, the British epaulettes.

Sinclair surveyed this group of scoundrels, at his ease, through the crevices of the cabin. He had some previous knowledge of

all of them. They had become notorious enough, along the Santee and Edisto, for the worst crimes in the calendar; and had been outlawed, under various names, by both Marion and Sumter. These partisans had posted them along the wayside, upon blazes of the trees, authorizing all good citizens to arrest, and bring them to camp as felons, and to put them to death if they resisted. While the armies lay below, and were in force along the regions named, these obscene birds kept close in sundry hiding-places. The swamp gave them a refuge quite as secure as it afforded to the patriots. The diversion, to the upper country, of the forces of the patriots and British, had given the outlaws temporary freedom. They were now making full use of their brief immunity, and had already shown themselves in various places, which were by no means prepared for them, enacting crime, and inspiring terror, where they came. The traveller butchered by day, the farmhouse fired by night;—these deeds suddenly shocked and terrified the quiet precincts, which, in the diversion of the war from the lower to the upper country, had forgotten some of their precautions.

The sterner passions of Willie Sinclair grew fearfully aroused as he looked in upon the savage group.

“Would to God I had but half a dozen of my troopers here at this moment!” was his soliloquy, muttered through his clenched teeth. “How freely would I deliver every mother’s son of them to the swinging limb! It is well that I moved so promptly. In that stable-loft, they would have fired it over my head rather than suffer my escape. I could have slain one or more of them no doubt. But I must have perished—burned alive or butchered—as I sallied forth. Thank God, we have the open woods for it if there is to be any trouble; and I have the track of them! But something may be done to increase my securities.”

Thus saying, the major of dragoons, as if confirmed in a previously-meditated purpose, moved confidently round to the front of the cottage, and made his way to the tree, to the branches of which Pete Blodgit had fastened the horses of the outlaws. Here he drew from his belt a large and sharp knife, with which he smote off one of the stirrups from each saddle. He then slipped the bridle of each steed, and set the animals

free, taking the bridles off with him to a thick patch of brush and briers, into which he thrust them all, completely out of sight.

"They'll have work to pick up the horses, and something more to follow with fleet spur. That they will try to pursue, I nothing question. This rascal, Blodgit, will reveal all. He will desire their help, and, to procure it, will report the gold in my possession. The temptation will be too great for them to resist. They are now sufficiently audacious, and have no notion that we have any troop below. Still less do they dream of my own squadron upon the Santee, and of the troop of Peyre St. Julien, at Leasuck. Were my own boys but five miles nearer; but they will surely be at the Barony by noon to-morrow. Let them pursue, the scoundrels!—they can't well get ahead of me, unless the devil helps them; and I can maintain the Barony against so small a party until help shall arrive."

From brief muttered soliloquies like these, we may gather the essential clues to the relations of the several parties. Sinclair moved away as he spoke, gave one more look at the outlaws at their carousals, then sped off, with steps at once firm and cautious, to the spot where he had fastened his horse. Mounting, he turned the beast out of the woods into the main road, leading upward, and went forward at a moderate trot, as if unapprehensive of the dogs of danger at his heels.

He had calculated the chances fairly. He was not a moment too soon upon the road.

CHAPTER VI.

ALL-FOURS.

"THE picters, Pete," said Hell-fire Dick, as he emptied his cup of Jamaica, and handed the vessel to one of his companions for a fresh supply. "Bring out the picters."

"What—ah!" was the hesitating answer of Blodgit, showing no disposition to obey, yet not prepared to adopt the plan of bold denial which his mother had counselled.

"Well, what the —— are you gaping about! The cards, I say!"

"And I say no playing cards here to-night!" cried the old woman, from within. "Git you off now, all of you, and don't be keeping a poor sick woman a suffering the want of sleep bekaise of sich company as you. I'd thank you all to be a riding, and not be making a sick woman sicker by your noise."

"What's that howling in there, Pete?" said Hell-fire Dick, turning savagely upon the overseer. "Is it any wild animal?"

"It's only the old woman. She's mighty sick, I tell you, and sore with the rheumatiz, and all sorts of sufferings."

"That's good reason why she shouldn't be sore upon the tongue. Shut up, old woman, unless you'd wear a snaffle for the rest of your life, and not wear it too long at that. I've got a mighty good way of curing a sore tongue. We tried it first on that old hag, mother Gelzer. We routed up her rogue of a husband, one night, and haltered him to the bedpost while we looked into his consarns. The old hag, his wife, kept up the fire so hot, that 'Skin-the-Sarpent' gin her a tap that sent her into the fireplace. But she scrambled out, half blazing and full of ashes, and never seemed to mind the burn at all; her tongue going worse than ever. 'Sarpent' wanted to cut her tongue out, but I showed him how the thing was to be done.

I slipped a snaffle into her jaws—firmly bitted her—and by a hitch back of the ears, made of deers' sinews, made as good a *kairl* as ever took the heel of a troublesome colt! She a-most gnawed through tongue and snaffle both, but it stood: and it's surprising how quiet she was after that. Let your mammy hear that history, Pete, and she'll may be grow more sensible than to put in, when men's upon business with one another."

It did not need that Pete should repeat the history. His amiable mother had heard every syllable. But the fate of mother Gelzer did not discourage her tongue in its habitual exercise; particularly when she thought of the night rapidly escaping, and the chances of Willie Sinclair's getting off safely with the hundred guineas.

"I ain't afeared of your hitch, you onmannered rascal; only you try it on me, and ef you never had the taste of a raw knife in your witals before, you'll have it then. Ef Pete Blodgit wasn't the most mean-sperrited fellow in the world, he'd never stand thar, and let any beast on two legs say imperdent things to his poor old mother what's got the rheumatiz. Oh! ef I was only able to lift a leg, you wouldn't be heving sich carryings on in any house whar I was the mistress. Here, Pete—Pete Blodgit, I say—come in here to me!"

"And I say, Pete Blodgit," answered Hell-fire Dick, "do you stay here with me; and I say, get out the picters here, in double quick time, if you wouldn't have sich a spur in your redicilous ribs as will make you think a thousand wild cats was a travelling through you."

"Feeling's believing, Pete," cried Skin-the-Serpent, taking the overseer by the nape of the neck, and spinning him round the floor like a tee-to-tum. "Thar!" continued the fellow, "do you onderstand now that we want the picters?"

"And will *hev* 'em!" echoed Ralph Brunson, following up the game, and spinning the fellow round in the opposite direction. Then, grappled in like manner by Joe Best, Pete executed such revolutions as a drunken man sees going on in the heavens as he goes home on a starry night.

"I'll git 'em! I'll git the kairds—only gi' me a chaine! Lord ha' marcy, men, you're all so rumbunctious!"

The poor devil could no more have seconded the manhood

of his mother, than he could undertake the journey on Alborak to Mahomet's Paradise.

"Quick about it, then, pretty Pete; we wants to be doing."

The cards soon made their appearance: a well-thumbed pack, greasy and ragged by repeated use, and with his majesty's face, well smutted, upon them.

"The Jack of Spades is a gentleman," cried Hell-fire Dick, seizing them across the table—and yelling out the chorus of a gaming party well known in that day—in which Joe Best, who prided himself on a voice, took up the strain, and fairly outdid the chief ruffian of the group.

"The Jack of Spades is a gentleman,
And he loves to drink and play,
And he flings the dice with look that says,
What ho! let the devil pay!"

The song, bravely begun by the master-spirit of the gang, was silenced by the same imperious person when he found that he was not suffered to officiate as prime minister. Hell-fire Dick—whom we shall hereafter call by the less offensive phrase into which his *nom de guerre* was subdued by certain of his companions—"All-fire Dick"—with a roar and stamp of the foot, now cried out:—

"Blast it, Joe Best, you think yourself a raal mocking-bird, and hev' such a conceit of your pipes that you don't know when to stop when you begin. Git out your pewter, old fellow, and let your pipes alone. Change is mighty scarce, boys. I'm a-wanting some. Blodgit, what money hev' you got?"

Blodgit groaned, remembering the treasure only so recently transferred to Willie Sinclair's safe keeping—groaned pitiously.

"What's that grunt about! But, go 'long, Spoony, and put up the critters, and give 'em a bite; and be back as soon as you kin. We'll want you to bring out your money pouch, pretty Pete."

It was the old woman, this time, who groaned within. She, too, had heard the speech of the ruffian, and her memories were equally distressing on the subject of the lost treasure—lost, but still supposed to be in the stable, and available upon conditions.

"What! the old woman still has a tongue! Well! she

may grunt with it as much as she pleases, and we'll 'scuse it on the score of the rheumatiz. But, don't let her be talking, Pete, for as sure as thunder, if she worries our ears, we'll try the snaffle upon her!"

"The onrighteous villains!" muttered the old woman, as she heard the warning, uttered specially for her ears. "And they'd do it, too, they would! I knows 'em; and that poor mean-sperried son of mine, would stand by and see them hitch his own mother 'up by the tongue, and never be the man to out-knife, and stick, right and left, to save me from it! Oh! ef I was a man!"

Here again she called to Pete, but in whining tones of entreaty, as of one suffering.

"Pete, Pete Blodgit—come in here."

"Can't, old lady," answered All-fire Dick; "He's got to see after the horses. Then he's got to bring out his shillings and continentals and I'arn how to be a gentleman by losing his money."

"He's got no money, I tell you!" cried the old woman, forgetting her subdued accents.

"No! as I'm a living sinner, I haint got no money."

And the pair groaned in sympathy together.

"Psho, boy! don't be lying! Don't we know you've been selling a smart chaine of corn and fodder, and got the shiners for it. We've got sharp eyes upon you, Pete, and must go snacks, boy. But we'll play fair. Winning aint 'thieving, 'cording to our laws and edication—and you shall have as good a chaine at *our* pouches as we have at your'n! Suppose your'n is the fullest? What of that? a purse is a purse, boys—"

"Ay, ay! That's good law!"

"And thar's as much satisfaction to a man that love's to do a thing handsome, in winning a penny as in winning a pound. 'Taint the amount that you win, Pete, that give's the satisfaction; it's the pleasure of beating one's innimy; it's the fun to beat the beater—to be the best man on the ground, and to be able to slap your sides and crow like a red-gill'd rooster—' *Coo-coo-roo-coo! Coo-coo-roo-coo-a!*' while all the rest of the crowd' stands by, and don't know whether to cry or to laugh!"

That's it, Pete; so don't be a sneak—and don't mind the difference twixt your pouch and mine, which is the heaviest. It's your'n now—it's mine to-morrow! What then? we've had the play, old boy; and we've done our best, and the glory's thar, Pete, though the guineas may be gone! Thanks to the stars and moon, Pete, we know you've got the gould, and that's why you see us here to-night! You don't think we'd ha' come, and troubled your 'spectable mammy, in these late hours, ef we didn't know that you'd got so much good goulden guineas, as wouldn't suffer you to have your nateral sleeps. But, fill your glass, Pete; hyar's to you; and big stakes about the board; and the jack of spades for ever!"

Pete groaned again, and the mother groaned also from within. They felt that their game was twixt hawk and buzzard. If the gold was to be wormed out of Sinclair's pockets, through his heart, what should save it from such ruffians as these who now declared their knowledge of the overseer's possessions. On all sides the ruin seemed inevitable, and the ready instincts of mother and son conceived their predicament at a glance. In very despair, Pete obeyed the invitation of All-fire Dick, seized upon a cup and swallowed a heavy potation of the unadulterated Jamaica at a gulp.

"That's going it strong, Pete," quoth Skin-the-Serpent, "and shows that you're gitting your courage up for a great game."

"The sooner the better," said All-fire Dick. "And so, Pete, put up the horses and come up to the scratch."

Here Joe Best struck up a stave:—

"The horse to the rack,
And the mouth to the can,
A laughing lass, and a foaming glass,
And merry's the life of man."

"Psho! Shut up, Joe Best, you are too d—d musical for one's hearing."

All-fire Dick was something of a despot. He kept his followers in pretty tight bonds, only tolerated as they found him a profitable desperado.

"Away, Pete, with the horses, and the sooner you're back, the sooner we come to our rights. Be off.—Drive on, Sarpent! spade's trump! my suit, and I'll work you this time!"

Pete disappeared. The game proceeded. The old woman groaned aloud as she heard the door close behind her son, and the ruffians yelled back to her in derision. But many minutes had not elapsed, when Pete was heard again at the door.

"Whar did we hitch the critters?" he asked.

"Where did *you* hitch them, Sneak?" was the answer. "What the d—l do you mean? Can't you find them?"

"Well, I thought 'twas to the water oak; but they're not thar now."

"You're drunk, Pete—look about you! You've barked up the wrong tree. 'Take the lantern."

"No! don't need! The stairs are a-shining."

Well, look about you. It's the Jamaica that blinds your eyes. Take another pull and see cl'ar.—What trumps, Sarpent? You're strong in spades, this time."

"Reckon I am! What do you say to that!"

"Brimstone! Cotch'd my jack, by the pipers. But we'll count for *game*; thar's *low*."

Pete, meanwhile, had again disappeared; but not for long. He soon returned; this time, after making a discovery which was by no means calculated to dissipate his own disquiet, while it fully awakened that of his uninvited guests.

"The critters are all off—and look thar!"

As he spoke, he threw upon the table the four stirrups, each with a fragment of the leather, which Willie Sinclair had cut from the several saddles.

"What the h—'s that!" cried All-fire Dick, starting up, in mixed rage and consternation.

"I reckon it's the starrups of every saddle of the crowd."

There was general consternation, and a horrid confusion of tongues, as each man singled out his own.

"And whar did you find these?"

"Under the oak where I hitched the critters."

"And the horses?"

"Gone! They're off somewhar!"

"Brimstone and fire! Who the h—l have you had here to-night, Pete Blodgit? who's about?" They rushed out *en masse* as the inquiry was made.

"Nobody but Willie Sinclair!"

Blodgit made the response reluctantly; but his invention offered him no means of evasion, and a prompt answer was essential to his own safety. Had a bolt from heaven fallen that moment at their feet, it could not have confounded them more.

"Willie Sinclair!" was the unanimous exclamation, and each man gripped his pistol.

"Willie Sinclair here!" cried All-fire Dick, seizing the overseer by the throat, and drawing back intuitively into the shadow of the house and out of the light of the doorway through which the candles cast a feeble gleam.

"Hark ye, you dirty skunk, ef you're playing me false, I'll slit your throat from ear to ear, in the twink of an eye!"

"I aint playing you false—it's true!"

"Why didn't you tell us Willie Sinclair was here? When was he here? Where was he hiding? Speak you eternal flea-skip before I—"

"Oh! jest loose my throat!" was the gurgling and choking speech—"and I'll tell you all! I will!"

"The truth, you rascally sneak, and nothing but the truth."

"So help me God."

"Well! out with it."

The fellow told them all, not even suppressing the facts about the buried treasure. The groans of his soul, once permitted, emptied their prison-house!

"Gimini! most on to a hundred guineas! and we've been a-fooling away the time, when we might have been filling our pockets! And he's in the stable?"

"Yes! I lock'd him up safe. Thar's the key."

"Dick! boys! Let's at him right away."

"Psho! Sarpent," replied the leader of the outlaws—"You're almost as great a fool as Blodgit. Do you expect to find Will Sinclair in the stable-loft now? Do you reckon he'd go back there, after cutting off our stirrups and turning loose the horses? He's too keen for that. He'd be as great a fool as you ef he did."

"But how did he git out?" asked "Serpent" simply enough; "when here Blodgit's got the key of the stable."

"Well, in a hundred ways. He shot back the bolt from the inside, or Blodgit forgot to lock."

"No, I didn't forgit; and the bolt's a covered one; he couldn't git at it with knife or finger."

"He has certainly got out, and done this mischief, or there's some other inimy about us! Are you sure, Blodgit, that he came alone."

"I never seed but him. Thar's no telling!"

"Ten to one he had nigger 'Bram at his heels, and kept him back as a spy on Blodgit. It may be 'Bram let the horses loose."

"Then, it may be that Sinclair's still in the stable."

"We'll soon see to that! Look you, Joe Best, take Ralph Brunson with you, and look up the horses. I and Sarpent will see after Sinclair. If he's in the stable yit, I'll take the change out of him, though I have to put the lightwood splinters to the nest. See to the horses, Joe. The only wonder is he didn't cut their throats instead of the stirrups. I know that would ha' been *my* game. Come on, Sarpent. That key, Pete!"

"Mustn't I come?"

"For what? What kin *you* do? Stay here, lad, and, like a good son, tend to your 'spectable mammy. She may want you. Keep close. Keep your eyes right till we come back; for, as sure as we catch you sneaking about *us*, Pete, we'll slit your gullet! Do you hear? I'm jubous of you, boy! as for Sinclair and the guineas, if they're not gone, look to me to account for them. You shall have a chaince, Pete."

Pete retired groaning to the cabin, where his mother provided a commentary of sufficient length and bitterness upon his "mean sperrit." The guineas were evidently gone, as regarded *their* hopes; and they now rejoiced in the belief that Sinclair had gone off with them.

"The Lord in his marcies grant that Willie Sinclair's off," groaned the old woman. "It's *his* gould and his sister's, and he's got the right to it!"

It is surprising how instinctively the feeling of honesty rises into the heart, when there is no longer a possibility of playing the rogue profitably. Mrs. Blodgit's religious feelings grew in the ascendant when the spoils of robbery were no longer within her reach. She now, for the first time, began to perceive the

full extent of the evils following the blind cupidity of herself and son.

"But it's not the loss of the gould, Pete. That's not all. But Willie Sinclair now knows all. He'll never trust you agin. He'll turn us out. He'll take away the keys, the corn, the fodder, the hogs, and he'll let Marion's men know that you're no better than a tory! Pete Blodgit, what a fool you was to try to cheat the man that's been the making of you! Oh! you're about the foolishhest, most meansperrited critter, to be a white man, that ever lived 'twixt the Santee and the Edisto."

"Oh! mammy, you oughtn't to say that! You know you told me to, and made me give you the bag of Spanish dollars."

"And it's well I did! where'd they be now, if I hedn't? And ef you had trusted your poor old mother with the gould, as well as the silver, we'd ha' had it now, you meansperrited—"

"Hush! They're a-coming back!"

Pete hastened out of the chamber to open for the party. The horses had been found. They had employed themselves quietly in picking the long grasses about the ruined building, and were easily caught. But each was bridleless, and Joe Best and Brunson busied themselves in looking up Pete's stores of rope and leather, with the hope to provide substitutes for present use. They rightly anticipated the purpose of All-fire Dick and Skin-the-Serpent, to pursue a fugitive who carried a hundred guineas at his girdle.

CHAPTER VII.

PURSUIT AND PASTURAGE.

WE, who already know that the outlaws must be disappointed in their search after Sinclair in the stable, must not be surprised to learn that All-fire Dick and the Serpent made their approaches to that supposed fortress with the caution of old soldiers. They knew their man; and quite as well know how formidable would be his defence, if wakeful, in such a position, armed, as he was known to be, with sword and pistols. Blodgit had also apprized them of the three muskets, and the powder and ball. He had relieved his own griefs, by telling his whole story. Their hope lay chiefly in taking Sinclair by surprise, if still in the stable; though the sagacity of the outlaws readily conceived the improbability of such a case; unless, indeed, the practice upon their steeds had been done by other hands than those of Sinclair. This was not improbable, and there was still a possibility of finding him asleep, and unsuspecting, in his nest.

They stole upon it, therefore, with the wariness of the wild-cat finding his way into the poultry-yard. Blodgit's key was well oiled, and they penetrated the stable without making the slightest noise. We need not report their progress—how they “snaked” through the stable, and “snaked” through the loft, and “went on their bellies,” for their pains! Enough that, after having exercised the nicest vigilance in searching the premises, they found the nest empty—the bird flown!

“We might have known it,” quoth All-fire Dick, “knowing the man, and seeing that his horse is gone.”

“What's to be done?” asked the Serpent.

“Done!” was the fierce response, “why, give chase as fast as may be! Are we to lose a hundred guineas without a ride for it? He's gone, no doubt, up the road to the Barony—to his father's. There's no other route for him to take to-night. If

his horse was fresh he might push on farther—knowing we're here, and thinking we might be after him soon. It's cl'ar he had some such notion of it, by his cutting the stirrup-leathers. He's heavy loaded—powder, bullets, muskets, and gould! He'll ride slow. We must overhaul him in nine miles."

"That is, if we find the horses."

"Ay! d—n him! Look you, Sarpent, I've a most eternal hate for that same Willie Sinclair. I hate him bekaise he's a gentleman; and he makes you feel it. I know'd him, and sarved under him once, and the very look of him made my blood bile in my veins. I've got his tracks. I've found out one of his hiding-places in Four-Hole Swamp. I tracked that big-backed fellow, Jim Ballou, thar, and know the signs. I shall track *him* thar some of these days, and 'twon't be his money that shall save him, I tell you, or his fine gentleman airs, whenever I can get a fair dig at his ribs. But that's for another time. Let's hurry off now, and start the boys."

The horses, we have mentioned, were found by the other two, greatly to the satisfaction of their leader. It was no pleasant arrangement, however, that which found them compelled to pursue without stirrups, and with plough-line bridles:—nay, hardly these—for one of the fellows rode wholly without bridle of any sort. But the evil lay mostly in the embarrassment. There was not one of the outlaws who was not quite as familiar to the horse as an Arab—who could not have ridden him fearlessly, glued, as it were, to his back—without harness of any kind. It was but to clap the knees close to his quarters, wreath a hand in a wisp of the mane, throw the body forward, and yell out like a wildcat on a *charivari*, and the pace, if a killing one, was so rather to horse than rider. Our outlaws, accordingly, though furious at the trick played on them, and the injury done to their equipments, were yet not wholly *hors du combat*. Sinclair's operations had only retarded, not prevented, the pursuit. But the delay was something gained to him, in the jaded condition of his steed, the burden which he had to carry, and the wearied state of the rider.

The outlaws allowed no unnecessary time for consultation. They were all men of prompt action, and their arrangements were soon made. When about to start, Pete Blodgit was

suddenly seen to appear on horseback among them. His resolution had been taken at the suggestion of his amiable mother, who, in the event of Sinclair being taken, was duly anxious that her son should be present at the division of the spoils. Not that she deluded herself with the idea that he could *coerce* the outlaws into any consideration of his claims. But something she thought might be done by whining—well knowing that, though we may brain the insolent mastiff, or the barking cur, we cast a bone to the lean hound who only looks up with pitifully pleading visage. This was now the lean hope of the innocent couple!

But All-fire Dick was not prepared to accord this one chance to the miserable Pete.

“You here! Git back to your hole. Slink, if you wouldn’t taste cowhide, fasting.”

“I thought you’d let me ride with you, Cappin Dick,” humbly answered the sneak.

“None of your Cappin Dicks with me. I’m no cappin I’m ‘Hell-fire Dick’ to friends and inimies. Let you ride with us! and what good are you? Kin you fight? If you had the liver of a man would you have let Willie Sinclair strip you of every shilling? Git back to your hole before I lace you with a red riband stripe for every inch of white skin on your back.”

The counsel was enforced by a couple of strokes which sent the wretch off in a twink. The next moment, with a shrill whistle, the outlaws were on the road and away.

But Pete Blodgit was not to be left behind. Spite of the terrors of cowhide, he was resolved to be in at the fleecing of the victim; and, grinning under his smarts, as well of mind as of body—for such an animal *does* suffer from a sort of shame and sense of despicableness—he pushed his horse forward, sufficiently in the rear of the pursuing party to escape their notice, yet sufficiently close to be able to overcome any interval of space, in tolerably short time, should the others be able to overhaul the fugitive. Pete had really no definite hope or object in thus joining the pursuit; but nothing short of the terrors of death could have overcome the painful fascination of the adventure. Merely to *see* the gold of which he had been

deprived—even though he should see every piece of it pass into other hands—was something better than never to gloat over it again.

He rode accordingly:—sometimes forgetting himself, and spurring eagerly ahead—then, under some prudent precautionary fear, dropping behind into a walk, and preparing to shroud himself in the bushes, should the outlaws, *par hazard*, fall suddenly back upon him.

They, meanwhile, went at the top of their speed. A wild chase, no doubt, but not without its calculations. Assuming Sinclair to have had an hour's start of them, he had covered some five miles of ground. To overtake him was possible; but they conjectured readily what would be his policy in that event. He must take to the woods; and, in his doing so, lay their better chance of securing him, since, throwing themselves between him and the Barony, cutting him off from that shelter, their game was to beat the woods, in broad daylight, until he was found. They were keen dogs for a warm scent, and did not despair of finding him by daylight. Besides, they could command the use of hounds, practised in the pursuit of men; and, even as they rode, they calculated on the necessity of sending off one of their party, by dawn, down to the kennel of Zeke Rodgers, one of their confederates, some five miles off. To anticipate Sinclair, in his attempt to gain the Barony, was their present object; and, whether they passed him on the road or not, was by no means a consideration, since the whole of the next day was before them, and they had no knowledge of military parties, anywhere about, to interfere with their pleasant pastime in the hunt. Their policy was an obvious one.

Sinclair, a man of great woodland resources, readily anticipated all these calculations of the outlaws, if once they undertook pursuit. But he calculated his own policy also. He did not push his beast beyond a trot during the hour which he had been upon the road; and, at the close of this period, he suffered him to subside into a walk. Thus quietly moving, he was better able to take in distant sounds, than if he had suffered the hoofs of his own steed to beat up the ears of silence.

Nimrod was a good walker, and the difference between his walk and jog-trot was not considerable. He had, accordingly,

compassed some eight miles of his progress, when his rider caught the sounds of pursuit upon the wind. He instantly took the woods; but not, as the pursuers anticipated, on that side of the road upon which the baronial settlement of his father lay; but the opposite. This procedure, as differing entirely from the natural suggestions in all similar cases, was designed to put the pursuit at fault. Sinclair, in the opposite woods, was unsuspected. The only disadvantage that lay in the adoption of this plan, was in the necessity which it compelled, of making a greater circuit than otherwise would have been requisite, and of exposing the fugitive, for a moment or two, out of cover, while again crossing the road to recover the region whither his flight was directed. But this necessity did not seem to involve much peril, since he could choose his own place and moment for the attempt.

Satisfied on this score, and that he was sufficiently sheltered by the dense forest in which he had taken refuge, our hero's policy now was, to suffer the pursuers to pass him, and to be sure of this fact himself. With this object, he rode his horse a hundred yards into the wood, then alighted, fastened him to a bough, and coolly took a bee-line back to the road, on the very edge of which he covered himself closely, among a clump of scrubby oaks. Here, "squat like a toad," he waited, without apprehension, the approach of the outlaws. It was only with a slight quickening of the tides about his heart, that he saw them at length heave in sight, one after the other, four dark and hurrying shadows, going at a smart canter, and whirling along without the slightest heed of the spot where he harbored. He suffered them to pass out of sight and hearing before he prepared to rise; and, just when he was about to do so, his keen ears caught the sound of another horse coming from below.

"Ha! If this should be Peyre St. Julien, now, with his troop, how we shall make the feathers of these rascals fly."

Our major of dragoons waited, still crouching in his cover, to see the approaching party. It was *not* his friend and comrade St. Julien.

"Blodgit, as I live!"

He knew him by his horse, which was unfavorably marked, in the estimation of the jockeys, by four white feet.

"Four white feet," quoth Sinclair, repeating a proverb, "give him to the crows."

Blodgit passed slowly at a jog-trot. Sinclair readily conceived the secret of the latter's progress.

"They have refused to let him join them in the chase; but he hankers after his share of the guineas. Fool! they would slit his weasand before they would let him have a stiver."

Blodgit was suffered to pass out of sight also, before our fugitive rose from cover, and picked his way back to the spot where he had hitched his horse. Here, he restrapped, more securely, his sack of powder; rearranged his whole equipment; tightened his girth, reprimed his pistols; then coolly resumed his progress, using but the one precaution of moving onward, at such a depth in the cover of the woods, as to keep him from alarming any person that might happen to be watching along the road. Fortunately, the region was a familiar one; his old stamping-ground, distinguished in his memory, by many a squirrel and 'coon hunt, when a boy, and by numerous achievements of a more exciting kind, when, grown to man's estate—

"With horse and hound, to strike the deer,
The hunter took his way."

Confident, therefore, of his course, Sinclair proceeded as leisurely and coolly as if untroubled by any apprehension. Perfect silence brooded over his path. The cool airs of morning were freshening in the wood—the stars were lessening above, waning or stealing out of sight. The route was dark enough to render his forest progress slow; but he betrayed, and really felt, few anxieties. So perfectly assured was he of his whereabouts, that, when on a line with the great avenue of the Barony, he stopped short, and, looking about him, soon found a little Indian trail which he knew conducted to it; but he had no purpose to pursue it, and, still pushing forward, he went fully half a mile above, before he inclined once more toward the high road. When within speaking distance of it, he paused, and gathered up his several clues of thought.

"These rascals take for granted that I am harbored in the woods below. They will skirt the lower edge of the plantation, covering themselves along the skirts of the open fields and

avenue, to intercept me as I approach. Such are the probabilities. Well—well!”

And the major of dragoons drew near to the road, slowly, very slowly, with ears keenly set for the wind, and eyes peering into the solid darkness that now rose up like a wall across the route only thirty yards beyond. Thus, looking and listening, he went forward boldly, and crossed the road in safety, unseen of mortal eyes.

He found himself now in a dense forest, half a mile above the avenue, but still forming a part of the immense baronial estate of his father. He advanced into the thicket a full quarter of a mile, then turned the head of his horse downward, and made for the negro settlement. This lay on the edge of a wood, which formed an admirable physical barrier on the east, fronted an open indigo-field, in cultivation, upon the west, and by a narrow lane, between the field and the negro-houses, conducted to the mansion, and the adjacent buildings; all of which lay buried in a world of evergreens at the close of a long and noble avenue of stately forest-trees, elms, water-oaks, and pines.

Ben Bowlegs was the *driver*, or orderly-sergeant of Colonel William Sinclair, of Cherokee war memory. Ben, himself, had been through the Cherokee war, as a henchman of his master. Ben was an old soldier, accordingly, and made a first-rate plantation orderly. He had but one grand idea as a planter, and that lay in a single word; but that word, like the potent “*sesame*” of the Arabian tale, involved a large body of practical philosophy. “Push!” was the whole sum of Ben’s policy. Push at the beginning, push at the middle, push at the end; be always pushing! And Ben’s pushing made crops! But he did not spare himself in pushing others. Ben carried out his principles into practice. He never slept on performances *done*, as negroes and common people are very apt to do. He passed to new ones. He was a moral steam-engine, working himself, and driving every one ahead. He pushed his master, as well as his brother-slaves; and assigned *him* his tasks with the pertinacity of one who was resolved to be something more than a counselor. His reverence for his master was never such as simply to endeavor to *please* him. Ben Bowlegs delivered the truth in

spite of consequences. Was Colonel Sinclair about to blunder? Ben interposed abruptly enough, with—

“Look yer, maussa, ef you wants to play h—ll wid de crop, da’s jist de way for do um. Better now, you go see arter dem bloodhauss in de pastur’. Dat d—n son ob a skunk, Toby, he nebber does jussice [justice] to dem young hauss. Da’s what you to see arter! Leff de crap to you driber. You kin truss *him!*”

But, thus irreverent to his old master, Ben was quite another person when dealing with the young one. His love, here, supplied the place of reverence; and his admiration was of such a sort as to deprive him of all his critical acumen, when he had to judge of young Willie’s opinions and performances. We need not attempt to account for his passion for “young Mass Willie.” Enough, that the fact is unquestionable. And now, to show our purpose in introducing the driver to our readers at this moment.

Ben Bowlegs, whether because of some natural aversion to the sex, or because of the mature period of sixty-two to which he had arrived, was wifeless and childless. He was perhaps, too well pleased to be a master, to suffer himself to fall under the rule of any mistress. Ben dwelt, accordingly, in single-blessedness, in a very snug cottage, that occupied a salient angle, ranging at very nearly equal distances from the negro-houses and the corn-crib. A little grove, and a small turnip-patch, separated him from the yard in which the mansion-house stood. The distance was not considerable from either of these points. Ben’s wigwam stood upon pillars of pitch-pine, about three feet from the ground. You might approach it all the way from the confines of the forest under cover of sheltering evergreens. These particulars will sufficiently explain certain matters which we have now to evolve.

Well! Ben being the sole occupant of his house, it may be supposed that he slept in tolerable comfort. He usually slept well.

“Praise de Lawd!” was his occasional exclamation, “dere’s no woman yer to bodder me! Bressings ob de Lawd, dere’s no chillen to dribe de sleep from my eye! I kin hab my sleep when de night come, and nebber ax no body for le’ me ’lone.”

No man ever had a more profound sense of his good fortune, in these respects, than Ben Bowlegs; and no one, surely, ever more devoutly acknowledged the beneficence of Providence in affording him these sufficient causes of gratitude! Ben slept alone, slept well, and always awoke early. While his young master, Willie Sinclair, was dodging the outlaws, Ben's nose was making famous bugle-sounds in his cottage—wasting its music “on the desert air,” indeed; but, without any cavilling spirit to rebuke its free privileges. Ben had, accordingly, accomplished the largest amount of necessary sleep a good hour before the dawning of the day. He was now wakeful, and meditating what was to be done that day in the fields. Touching the tobacco, there was a weeding of the weed to be done; corn—there was the last hoeing: the corn was nearly made; some earnest meditations employed him in respect to a little patch of rice; and there were sundry interests which naturally exercised the mind of our model driver, particularly as Colonel Sinclair, who was himself a very good planter, employed no overseer. It was while busy with his field and farmyard problems, that Ben Bowlegs was suddenly startled into a new consciousness, by a certain mysterious rapping upon the floor beneath him. He listened and rubbed his eyes. The rapping was repeated.

“Lawd Gimini! it's young maussa!”

He jumped out of bed in a twinkle, stooped to the floor, raised the section of a plank, and our major of dragoons slowly shot up, from a rather humble posture, into his full height, and scrambled deftly into the apartment. It was very evident that the major and the driver had been at the same mysterious play before. Ben caught his master's hand joyfully, and shook it with a fiercely-loving gripe.

“Grad for see you, Mass Willie—no look for you dis time, but mighty grad for see you! T'ink you bin gone wid de sodgers up into de mountains. But grad for see you yer. Grad for tell you, sir, all's well yer, 'cept de ole colonel, dat's got de debbil and all-fire in his foot ag'in! But Miss Carrie's like a rose in de morning, and little Lottie is anoder leetle rose in de morning; and ebbry pusson dat you carss to yer 'bout is most astonishing, charming well, 'cept, as I say, de ole colonel;

and de fire in he foot makes him bile ober ebbry now and den, and it's mighty hard for a 'spectable gentleman to stan' him when he's in his ondecient passion! And how's *you*, Mass Willie? How's you bin? Lord delibber me, but it does seem as ef you was nebber to be done growing. You're a foot taller, I'm a-t'inking, then when you went off in de spring!"

And Ben the Bowlegged wheeled the young major about, making due presentation of him to every point of the compass, until he had satisfied himself that, in growing taller, his young master had lost nothing of that symmetry which had rendered him perfect in his eyes before.

"Well, Ben; as well as a man can be who has the appetite of forty Indians always, and not often the meal to satisfy one sufficiently."

"Lawd bless you, dat's wha' I says to myse'f, ebbry time I sets down to my dinner—I says, Lawd, ef I could only gee Mass Willie a bit ob dis bacon, or a plate ob dis rice, or a wing ob dis chicken, or a dozen ob dese eggs, or a bowl ob dis coffee, or somet'ing or udder, sich as I has a-hissing and a-smoking before me; wha' ebber I hab for my own eating dat day!"

"Thank you for your good intentions, Ben, and I'm sure your dinner would be a thousand times far more grateful than what we commonly get—the best of us—in camp."

"Lean beef—carrion, I may call um—skin and bone; sometimes no beef at all—not'ing better dan bile hom'ny—"

"Ay, indeed, Benny; and sometimes horse-beef, old fellow, such as my father had to eat, when you went with him, in the old Cherokee war."

"It's a most onmassiful life, Mass Willie, to be a sodger; and I tinks ob de bad libing for you ebbry day. But you'll hab somet'ing better to-day, please God! and ebbry day you hab for stay wid us."

"Not long, Ben! Camp duties can't suffer me to delay even where the beef is excellent; and you well know that so long as this war lasts, I am not likely to be met, coming home, with my father's smiles."

"Da's true, Mass Willic," answered the other with a sigh. "De ole gentleman's jest as foolish and onsensible as ebber; and jest now, wid de debbil and all-fire, burning in his foot,

and de troubles we've been habing wid some of dese outlying rascals in de swamp—butchering de cattle, and robbing de poultry-yard—he's biling ober, I may say, wid all sort ob on-reasonable vexations."

"What! have the tories been at work upon your cattle, Ben?"

"Well, sir, I'm a-tinking dat it's as much whigs as tories. When cattle-tieving's the business, and henroost-robbing, there ain't much difference, I'm a-tinking, among sodgers. Dey're all alike—whigs and tories, king's men and people's men; de fac' is, Mass Willie, de very sight ob a fat steer, or a clebber young heifer, naterally, I may say, turns an honest sodger into a tief!"

"Take care, Ben. If the soldier should hear you uttering any such sentiments?"

"I mus' uttar dem, Mass Willie, kaise, you see, it's de on-natural, Christian trute, I'm a-telling. Ebbry ole sodger is bound to tief chickens and cattle when de chaine is good for clearing out a henroost, or knocking a young steer on de head. Dey've been at dis work yer at de Barony, a leetle too often ob late to please de ole maussa; and he all but bile ober when he hears ob it, and feels de fire in his foot dat keeps him from mounting horse, and dribing de swamp for de rapscallions."

"And he curses the whigs accordingly?"

"Dat he does! He says it's all owing to de friends of liberty. Den he cusses de liberty, and den he grunts and says—'And my own son! my own son! He to take up arms ag'in his king and country, to help dese rapscallions!' But he don't cuss *you*, Mass Willie—no! no! he don't *zackly* do dat!"

"I am grateful for that, Benny—very grateful; but I'm afraid he comes monstrous nigh to doing so, when he's boiling over."

"Well, I reckon he would, Willie Sinclair—I reckon he would, ef 'twan't for an angel, dat just den light down close by his shoulder, and puts he arms round he neck, and looks inter he face jest so, with sich a smiling and sich a weeping in her eyes, and sich sweet words upon her mouth, and kisses too, dat his heart gets weakly and saft, and she stops de cusses on his lips; and he stops biling over, and forgits de British and de

whigs and de tories—forgits everyting but jest what de blessed white angel happens to say so saftly in his ears. Ah! Mass Willie, dat's a bressed critter, to be a woman, dat same gal child, Carrie Sinclair."

"Dear Carrie!" exclaimed the major of dragoons, while he involuntarily grasped the old negro's hand; and a silent tear suddenly gathered in his eye, bright and clear, as a pearl of ocean thrown up by the billows, and left upon the beaten shore in the smiles of an evening sunset. "Dear Carrie!" murmured the youth. "But you remind me, Benny. I must hurry to her and to the house, Benny, before the day opens broadly upon us."

"It's about day-breaking now, Mass Willie."

"Then you must stir yourself, old fellow, and see to my horse, and see to the bundles on his back. Put away the sack of powder and the bullets in the old hiding-place, and see that you hide my horse also. He must not go into the stables. In fact, it must not be known on the plantation that I am here. I must see Carrie; but I do not know that I shall let my father suspect my presence. I am pursued, Benny, and the plantation is even now under the close watch of 'Hell-fire Dick,' and a portion of his gang."

"Hell-fire Dick! He 'bout yer ag'in! Da's de same rapscallion dat's been feeding 'pon we cattle. I sure ob it!"

"Yes! likely enough. He is certainly here. I have seen him this night. I have also found out that scamp, Pete Blodgit—"

"Enty I bin always tell you, Pete Blodgit's a great rapscallion, and no better dan a scamp?"

"I know it now! But I have laid him bare. The scoundrel would have taken my life, could he have mustered courage for it."

"He no hab de heart, Mass Willie. He's a coward an' a rapscallion. Ha! le' me put finger on 'em."

"We may have a chance, Benny, to put the whole hand upon him, and a few other of these rascals. They were all on my track to-night; and are now harboring about the avenue, and skirting the lower woods. They, no doubt, believe me to be still below, and are watching there for my approach. I took

the opposite woods, got above the Barony, and came down by Henderson's old cattle-pen. It is my plan now, to lie still, not to be seen or suspected as having reached the Barony; for we know not what these rascals would have the audacity to attempt, now that they believe that all the troops, British and American, are above at Ninety-Six. If they were sure of my presence here, they might even attempt to sack the Barony, since they know that I have a considerable sum of money with me."

"Wha! dey 'tack de Barony? Le' 'em try! Enty ole maussa yer, and you yer, and *me* yer; and der's some sebben or eight ob we brack people dat ain't 'f'aid [afraid] ob de music when de bullets fly; and day will fight like bressed varmints, jest whenebber maussa say de wurd. Den we hab gun and pistol and swode; and enty you hab powder and bullet on de hoss? Le' me gone for 'em right away!"

"Do so, Benny; but first go and waken up little Peter, and let him open the house-door to me, so that I can't be kept waiting outside where I may be seen. And bring Tiger with you, so that I may renew my acquaintance with him *here*, lest he should fly out upon me, and alarm the neighborhood with his barking."

"I gone, maussa."

Soon, the faithful negro reappeared, bringing the powerful watchdog, an animal with a cross of the English bull upon the Irish wolf-dog, broad bullet-head, lion neck, ample chest, short, well-sinewed legs, and a short hair that lay smooth, and always looking moist, close to his skin. The fierce beast leaped to the caresses of his young master, with a loving whine, knowing him at a glance. Together, the two, the major and the dog, stole away to the dwelling, while Ben proceeded to put his young master's horse, and the several burdens which he bore, in several places of security.

CHAPTER VIII.

CUPID AND CUPIDITY.

OUR major of dragoons found no impediment in effecting his entrance into the dwelling. He was met at the door and welcomed by little Peter, who stood in waiting, his eyes not fairly opened, and his consciousness but partially excited. *Little* Peter was a fellow more than six feet high : but his growth, however great, never enabled him to outgrow the diminutive epithet which hailed his puny advent into life. The *little* stuck to him even when he had grown into a giant. *His* world, not unlike that of most great men, was tenacious of the disparaging epithet by which his greatness stood rebuked ; and seemed resolved never to recognise a growth which exposed so completely the absurdity of their premature judgment in his case. Neither the negro nor the white world is pleased, at any time, to acknowledge that its sagacity has been at fault, in failing to conceive the great capabilities of its own members, while they are yet only in the gristle.

Though only half awake, little Peter grasped his young master's hand with an unction which showed that the boyish relations of the two had been equally pleasant and familiar ; and our major of dragoons requited the gripe in a way to satisfy all the social sympathies in the negro's heart.

"Berry grad for see you, Mass Willie. Grad you come. Exceedant berry grad for see you."

"Thank you, Peter ; and I am glad to see you ! Why, boy, are you never to stop growing ? You are half a head taller than your master. Are you not ashamed to grow so tall ?"

Peter answered with a satisfied grin.

"Now, Peter, remember one thing. You are not to say a word to any living soul about my being here—not even to your wife ! Do you hear that, Peter ?"

"Hah! Bress God, Mass Willie, I ain't got no wife yit! Hope for hab one some day, and ef you be so good, Mass Willie, to say de good wud for me to Miss Carrie, and mek 'em le' me hab Congaree Polly, wha' wait on em——"

"Well, why shouldn't you have Congaree Polly, if you are both willing?"

"Das wha' I say, maussa."

"She's not too good for you, Peter—certainly not too handsome."

"Congaree Polly mighty good looking gal, maussa."

"Then she has undergone a marvellous improvement, Peter, like yourself. But, if you are satisfied, so am I; and I will report your wishes to my sister. But I remember Congaree Polly only as one of the most awkward creatures on the plantation, and wondered that Carrie took her into the house."

"Polly mighty smart and scrumptious, Mass Willie."

"I don't doubt the 'scrumptious,' Peter, and it may be that she has acquired the 'smart' too; but the beauty is quite another thing. However, if you really wish to be a married man, and she suits you, there can be no objection; provided she makes none. I will let my sister hear of it. In the meantime, Peter, do you remember that I am to be here in secret—nobody is to know, not even Congaree Polly, unless she gets the fact from myself or my sister; and that she will do, only because the matter can not well be kept from her. A secret never improves its complexion by unnecessarily uncovering its head. Lock your door again, Peter. Let Tiger remain with me for a while. He will be quiet here."

And the negro proceeded about his house affairs; and the major of dragoons, followed closely by Tiger, passed into the interior of the house with quiet footsteps, and a degree of confidence, which showed both parties to be equally familiar with all its recesses. Sinclair, wearing Indian boots—moccasins and leggins of buckskin—awoke no echoes by his tread; and the feet of Tiger, as if emulous of his master's stealthy progress, were set down as if he trod on velvet. The major passed the chamber in the upper story, in which his father slept, with increased caution of movement; and went on rather hurriedly to

that which his sister occupied, at the end of the passage. Tapping at the door lightly, he was promptly heard within.

"Who is that—Polly?" was asked, in the well-remembered accents of his sister. Another tap answered her, and a whistle through the keyhole, which she readily recognised.

"Willie! Can it be Willie?" were the words which distinctly reached the ears of the major. He whistled again, and then the voice whispered to him through the keyhole:—

"Wait a moment, Willie, till I throw on my gown."

He had not long to wait. The door was soon opened, and the brother and sister were instantly wrapped in a loving embrace; and little Lottie (Charlotte), a girl of ten years, followed for her embrace also; and, for a few moments, the joy of the meeting, after a long interval of absence and danger, kept all the parties from the expression of their feelings in speech. Meanwhile, we must not omit to mention that Carrie Sinclair was a tall fresh beauty of the *blonde* order, and little Lottie was very much like her;—"with a difference" of course. Both had very fair complexions, and very long, silken, brown hair, and Carrie had large swimming blue eyes, and a soft, small delicious mouth, that seemed gushing with red blood, even as an Indian peach whose cheeks you have parted with an eager knife. Willie Sinclair watched the two, perused them, we may say, with almost the fondness of a lover. And very precious indeed were they to his love. The ties of affection which united their hearts were of the tenderest sort, such as had never been sundered, or even shocked, for a single instant, from the happy hours of their innocent childhood to the present moment.

And few words were spoken for a delicious interval. They were content to gaze into each other's eyes, and to feel the pressure of each other's hands. The dialogue was murmured rather than spoken.

"Oh! Willie, I am so happy that I see you again, and safe, and well!"

"And I am so happy when I get back to the Barony, and find you without change, Carrie."

"And you have come now to stay with us, Brother Willie?" said little Lottie.

He shook his head, while he took the child into his arms.

"But a little while, Lottie. War suffers no long repose to the soldier."

"But the wars will soon be over, Brother Willie. Papa says that the king's troops will beat your soldiers out of the country."

"I hope not, Lottie, and think not!—and so,"—turning to Carrie, "so, he has a touch of the gout at this moment?"

"Yes, a pretty severe one too."

"A bad season for showing myself before him, Carrie."

Carrie looked anxious, but she did not answer; and, after a brief pause, she contrived to send Lottie out of the apartment; the major warning the child that she was, on no account, or to anybody, to mention that he was in the house."

"Not to papa, Brother Willie?" asked the child.

"Not even to papa, little Lottie. Leave me to do that myself, when the time comes."

The child, rewarded by another kiss from her brother, disappeared, and, with her departure, the dialogue became more free between the elder sister and the brother.

"Whether I shall show myself at present to my father, Carrie, must depend upon your report. His gout will add to the embarrassments between us, and the difficulty of avoiding painful language. He is, I fear, but little reconciled; and the absurd notion that he entertains, that our cause is failing, will make him more unreasonable and unreasoning. The relief of 'Ninety-Six,' the retreat of Greene before Rawdon, the arrival of new troops, three fresh regiments from Ireland, all of which he probably knows, have contributed, no doubt, to fortify him in his convictions that our cause is well nigh prostrated."

"Such is, certainly, the case, Willie," said the sister, with a mournful shake of the head. The brother continued:—

"He does not know, as yet, perhaps, that Rawdon has, in turn, been compelled to retreat; that 'Ninety-Six' has been evacuated almost as soon as relieved; that the Irish troops can not be trusted; and that the partisans are every day increasing in number, in spirit and confidence, and, under new leaders, hitherto unknown, are starting up, on all sides, like the armed men, from the teeth of the dragon! In brief, my dear Carrie, our cause in Carolina was never so prosperous in prospect before.

We have passed our darkest day. We are about to enjoy the new dawn."

"Not a word of this does he know, and, I may say, Willie, that, in his present conditions and mood, not a word is he likely to believe. He thinks the triumph of the British arms certain; and was, only yesterday, making it a subject of discussion—I suppose chiefly to worry me—whether, it became him, as a true subject, and as an honorable man, to interfere with a petition to Lord Rawdon, in your behalf, in anticipation of your captivity, trial and doom, as a traitor."

The major of dragoons laughed merrily.

"Why this is worse than ever, Carrie. The supposed successes of the British arms ought rather to put him in better humor."

"So it would, Willie, no doubt, had it not been for the discovery which he has lately made of your visits to a place on the Edisto, called Holly-Dale."

"Hah!" was the sudden exclamation of the major, while a warm suffusion passed over his cheeks. The sister beheld this, and said reproachfully:—

"Ah! Willie, there is a secret you have kept from me?"

"Not willingly. Not with any purpose of concealment, dear Carrie. I meant that you should know all in season. But tell me—what has my father heard, and from whom? Who has been here?"

"Your man, Ballou, was here, and I think that something dropped from him that led father to suspect. Afterward, there came a certain Captain Travis, an elderly person——"

"Ah!—indeed! He here?"

"Who, it seems, is the proprietor of Holly-Dale."

• "What did he come for?"—hastily.

"I did not learn; but father and himself were closeted together for a couple of hours. I saw them when they first met in the hall. They seemed to have known each other before."

"They served together in the Cherokee war."

"It was very evident to me that father did not like the man, nor did I!—he seemed a sly, selfish, fawning sort of person, with a mean carriage, a sinister look, and a stealthy cat-like motion."

"A true picture—too true!"

"When he was gone—and I was not present when he went—I found father full of rage and indignation. He spoke of this Captain Travis, as a mean, money-loving miser, who was more than suspected of peculation in the commissary department during the Cherokee war."

The cheek and brow of the major again flushed and reddened, and he rose from his seat, and paced the room. His sister paused and watched him. He returned to his seat after an effort, and said quietly—

"Go on, Carrie, with your story."

"Did you mark that fellow, Carrie?" and my father to me on my return to the room, when the guest had departed.—'did you mark his mean, avaricious aspect, his ratlike avidity of expression, his catlike stealthy movements,—the hateful cunning in his eyes, the sly, sneaking insinuating tones of his voice,—the utter baseness in everything about him?'"

"Well! go on," said the major, looking gloomy.

"Such was his question. Of course, I said as little as possible, seeing his humor, and knowing nothing about the person, who—I really felt—was anything but prepossessing in appearance. 'That fellow,' he continued, 'has made a fortune by peculation. He has large estates—lands, negroes, and I suppose money. But he is a scoundrel—and knows that I know him to be one! I spurned him, as such, when we served together among the Cherokees; and, but for that rebellious son of mine, he never would have dared to show his face in my house! Well! this wretch, this reptile, has the audacity, under the sanction of my own blood—my own son—to come here and propose an alliance with my family. What do you think of that?' said he."

"I never gave any such sanction:—I never authorized any such proposal:—I never spoke one syllable to Captain Travis on the subject."

Such was the hasty speech of the Major of Dragoons.

"Oh! I'm so glad, Willie, to hear you say so!"—exclaimed Carrie—"for, of a truth, brother, I have rarely seen father in such a passion as he was put by the proposals of this person. It brought on him this last attack of gout. Oh! if you can only

tell him that you never authorized this person—that you have no idea of the young woman, his daughter——”

“Alas! sister mine, I can say no such thing!” answered the youth, with an effort to speak gayly. “I can say that I sanctioned none of Captain Travis’s proceedings—that I authorized him to speak for me in nothing! But I confess to you, Carrie, my love, that I have a serious idea of his daughter; and that though I have no sympathy with the father—nay, think of him very much as our father does,—yet I should welcome an alliance with his daughter, as one of the most grateful of all mortal acquisitions.”

“Can it be possible, brother, that you would marry into such a low family?”

“I do not marry the family! Besides, Carrie, the family is *not* low! The mother was a Fergusson of St. Thomas’s, and a fine woman. The daughter is as noble and sweet a creature as may be found anywhere between the Peedee and the Savannah. She will do no discredit to any family in the country; and, once for all, hear it from me, Carrie, I shall never be the man to sacrifice the best feelings of my own heart, and the best claims in the heart and form of woman, to the prejudices of caste and society, which perpetually fluctuate in position, and just as frequently exhibit baseness as nobility, in the elements which they foster, and upon which they pride themselves!”

“But you surely, Willie, acknowledge the claim of caste and society?”

“To be sure I do, Carrie; but not when they err, and do wrong to claims which are not less legitimate than their own! I’ll tell you where they err, Carrie; in their inflexible resolve never to recognise those exceptional cases which are rightly acknowledged always, as such, even when we obey the rule. Caste and class properly pride themselves upon the habitual refinements of mind and moral, acquired in long periods of time. This constitutes their just claim to authority; and they rightly hold themselves aloof from associations with other classes, who do not know, and do not properly value these refinements. But there is, here and there, a natural nobility in individuals, which overrides the law, and demands recognition. There are persons to whom refinement is *native*—who are *born* nobles—delicate

and just in sentiment, magnanimous in soul, generous in courage, endowed with noble talents, and devoted to noble purposes. It is the duty of an aristocracy to acknowledge all such persons, as soon as found, and take them lovingly into their embrace, and seek to do them honor; and there is a twofold wisdom in doing so, since we thus add to our own resources of society, and increase our influence upon mankind at large. But classes are apt to show themselves too jealous of position, and too slow to recognise these occasional claims of the individual. The consequence is that they make him hostile; and he will bring his natural powers to bear against them—will expose their weaknesses, and revenge upon them his own hurts of self-esteem—an injustice that always avenges itself upon the wrong-doer; and, in the end, we pay a double penalty; forced not only, at last, to acknowledge the claims to which we unwisely opposed ourselves at first, but to pay them tribute also, and to submit to an authority which becomes exacting and despotic in proportion to the tenacity with which it has been resisted and denied. No one, more highly than myself, esteems the claims of social caste. It is a natural condition, and rightly possesses authority; but, God forbid! that I should sullenly and sternly reject the occasional individual, whose personal claims put him above his condition in society! He has received from nature his badges of nobility, and society is simply ridiculous when it opposes itself to the credentials which come patent from the hands of God himself! Be assured that, in all such conflicts, the class refusing to acknowledge the individual only proves itself unworthy, and perils all the securities upon which it prides itself."

"And is this young lady so attractive—so refined and intellectual, Willie?"

"I am a lover, Carrie, you know, and may be held to be somewhat blind, and somewhat extravagant; but, making all allowance, for that amiable insanity which sees nothing but perfection in the creature whom it loves, I am free to declare that I hold Bertha Travis to be one of the most gentle, pure, refined, and beautiful creatures that was ever born under the blessed vault of heaven!"

Carrie took the hand of her brother into her own, and, smiling sweetly, said—

"How I long to see and know her! Bertha! It is a pretty but an unfamiliar name. It is a pity, if one so beautiful, gentle, and well-endowed, should be scorned because of her family."

"She shall *not* be scorned, Carrie, by me, or by any whose respect I can compel," answered the major of dragoons, with the air of a man who had long been exercised in the freedom of a perfect will. He continued—

"I am sorry that the matter has been prematurely broken to my father. This is not the time for it. And why Captain Travis should have broached it, just now, I can not so well divine. He had not only no authority from me to speak of it, but I have never once spoken with him about it; indeed, between the father and myself there has been no cordial intimacy. But he is a shrewd politician, and there are signs in the horizon for which I suppose him to be preparing. There are, indeed, certain influences acting upon him, which he either can not resist, or the conflict with which he would escape. He would, I fancy, cheerfully ally himself with our family, in the hope to acquire equal position and security. This movement proves that *he* sees the decline of the British power!"

"Father spoke of him as one who really cared nothing for either party, or as inclining rather to the American cause, but driving a good trade under favor of the British."

"I believe it; and the question with him now, is, under which play can he be most secure, while realizing the most profits? The question leads to other influences, which do not leave him quite as free as he could wish to be. He has some entanglements—has some dangerous secrets abroad in other hands—and there is one whom he well knows would sacrifice him without scruple, and destroy him with the British, unless he can pacify him. This person is *my* danger also—my black dog, that haunts me with a fear. In brief, Carrie, this person is my rival!"

"Ah! for the affections of Bertha?"

"Precisely! And you can now conjecture the motive of Captain Travis in broaching to my father the subject of an alliance with his house."

"I do not see, Willie."

"Simply, then, there is a certain Richard Inglehardt, a cap-

tain of loyalists, who is a suitor for the hand of Bertha. Captain Travis would rather that she should ally herself with our family than with his, since his origin is rather humble. But Inglehardt has, I suspect, found the secret of Travis's dealings with both parties. The positive rejection of his suit, by Travis, would lead to the ruin of the latter. To save himself, he would unite with our people, if we would guaranty him protection. An alliance with me, he thinks, would secure it for him. To arrange for this object, has been, I suspect, the cause of his visit to my father. He has wished to sound and feel his way. He is eminently cautious and cunning. What he has said I can only conjecture; but, in all probability, not suspecting my father's loyalty, or the intensity of it, he has too freely shown his hand; an indiscretion to which my father's reserved demeanor—the consequence of his dislike for the man—has probably driven him. Now, Travis sees, as well as anybody, the precarious condition of British power in the country. He is preparing accordingly. He has shown his opinions, on this subject, to my father, who, of course, thinks nothing of the kind; and the result has been the explosion which you heard.

“And this Richard Inglehardt; what sort of person is he? Have you any reason to think that Bertha——”

She paused. The question she was about to ask might be a disquieting, as it was a delicate one.

“Ah! my black dog! Well, let me do the scoundrel justice. He is a scoundrel, but one whom you must respect for the strength that is in him. He is a good-looking fellow; dark of feature, with long, wild, black hair, glossy and rich; eyes intensely keen and piercing, but of icy coldness; of good, well-made figure, and graceful; quiet and subdued of manner; slow and circumspect; mild and amiable of demeanor; but savage, selfish, of a bloody recklessness of mood, who keeps no faith with any when his own policy seems to counsel falsehood, and one who is as tenacious of pursuit as the devil of his victim. Mentally, he is shrewd, quick, keen, and though but imperfectly educated, yet ready and intelligent. He is a person whose hostility compels great caution, if not fear. He is a good soldier, commands a smart company of rangers, and is brave enough, and bold enough, whenever he finds his profit in it.

He has known Bertha Travis from childhood. His father was a small Dutch farmer in the same neighborhood."

"Truly, Willie, a formidable rival. But she—Bertha—how does she like him? Does she incline to either, Willie?"

"Ah! Carrie, you will know it all, I see! Well, then, I may tell you, once for all, that I have no longer cause to fear with her. She is mine, Carrie—mine!"

And Carrie laughed delightedly, as she again flung her arms round her brother's neck, and kissed him.

"And now, Carrie, let me throw myself upon your bed, and snatch a couple of hours' sleep. That will suffice, and bring us to your breakfast-hour. I have much more to tell you, but must not begin now. I must sleep, child, now, or I shall be only half able to do the work that is before me. See that you keep fast the door, and, for the present, keep as secret as possible the fact that I am here. Much depends on it."

CHAPTER IX.

FAITH AND BREAKFAST.

For two hours exactly, did Willie Sinclair sleep. He was wrapped in slumber as soon as he had laid himself down, and awoke at the designated time of limitation. Such is the result of military habit. Sleep when you can, and wake always when you will! Carrie was absent when he awakened, and he had time to perform his ablutions before she reappeared. At her return it was very natural that she should resume the subject of his wooing, and of the damsel he had won. When was a little bit of domestic history, having for its theme a love burden, ever an ungrateful subject in youthful ears? But, in Carrie Sinclair's case, it was the curiosity of a loving sister that sought for his secret, and not an idle brain, or a silly fancy; and she welcomed all his confidences with a genial love. The natural satisfaction, nay, exultation, which he had displayed in revealing his triumph, in the story of his successful wooing, was fondly encountered by the sympathies of his sister. Carrie Sinclair had no such prejudices as filled her father's bosom, against the *caste* of the family in which her brother found his sweetheart. At all events, her prejudices were not deep-rooted, and constituted a sentiment rather than a feeling or a principle. She readily believed that the lady whom Willie had chosen was worthy to be her sister; and all the social barriers which she fancied had really existed between her family and that into which he proposed to marry, were dissipated by a breath. She took Willie's hand into her own, and pressing it fondly, exclaimed:—

"I must know her, Willie. I feel that I shall love her very much. How can I else than love the woman whom you love? But it will be a long struggle before you can overcome the prejudices of papa. You don't know how angry the report

made him; how bitterly he spoke of Bertha, and you, and Captain Travis. He has such a bad opinion of him, that I fear it will be impossible to reconcile him to the match."

"Never you fear, Carrie! Our good father is violent rather than steadfast. He blazes out into a passion, yet very soon forgets the passion; and where a passion is unreasonable, or where it is founded on an error, it is very apt to burn out very soon in such a nature as his. Besides, when he once knows Bertha——"

"But how is he to know her, Willie? How are we to meet?"

"The world is always in motion, Carrie, and opportunity stands at every man's elbow, sometime or other. You don't suppose this war is to last for ever, Carrie?"

"I don't know. It seems so, Willie! New troops from England, and——"

"The war is nearly burnt out now. These new troops are all that England has to send; and these are Irish wholly, whom the officers here can hardly trust! The English people are even more tired of the war than we. It has exhausted them; and they now *feel*, what they could not *see*, at the beginning of the conflict, that what they might have gained by preventing our Independence, is more than balanced by what they lose in the sacrifice of our trade. I doubt if the war can last another year. It would require some time to explain to you why I think so, and this is not necessary. Besides, I have other matters to tell about, of more immediate interest. I have not told you, Carrie, that I have been chased hither this morning."

"Chased, Willie, by whom?"

"By some of the most blood-thirsty ruffians of all the refugee tories in the country. I was at Pete Blodgit's last night. I have found that scoundrel out! He has been robbing us at a fearful rate; forgetting all his obligation to us; was selling everything, and hiding away the money! But I made the rogue disgorge; and, but that I was vigilant, I might have been brained with a billet for my pains."

"Impossible! What, Blodgit, for whom we have done so much!—whose mother we have fed, and nursed, and provided for, as one of our own family?"

"Ay, and who would have requited us, for all, after a very Christian fashion, by counselling her hopeful son to cut my throat! I have found them both out."

Here he told the much-wondering damsel all the story as it is already known to us. At the close, he laid before her the gold, the sight of which had proved so fatal to the virtues of Dame Blodgit and her son.

"Half of the gold is yours, Carrie."

"Keep it, Willie. I have no use for it."

"No! Do you keep it; and should *I* have use for it, I will know where to look. Keep secret that you have it, for the possession of gold is a rare danger at this juncture; particularly as the Barony is so poorly guarded;—my father laid up with gout, and myself absent! There are little squads of scoundrels all about the country, who will attempt anything desperate with such a temptation in their eyes. Our father's relations with the British secure him with *them*, while *my* connection with our side affords him similar security with *us*. But the refugees, whig and tory, are not to be restrained by either party, when they find an opportunity for plunder; and your best security now, is to conceal all objects of temptation."

"They are plundering us now."

"Of cattle, I know; but this must be endured. In fact, I shall have to do a little of this business of cattle-plundering upon the Barony, myself. But say nothing on this head—I do not know, indeed, but that your recent losses have been by our own people. At present, however, it is just as well that our father should suppose the diminution of his fat steers to be due altogether to the friendly aid of his loyalist connections. And now, Carrie, better see to your house affairs. It is time for our father to be stirring. See to him, and leave me here. Keep from him the fact that I am here—for the present, at least. I suppose it not likely that he will ask *after* me."

"He speaks of you often enough, Willie."

"But not lovingly, Carrie."

"Yes, indeed, for he speaks angrily."

"Ah! then there is hope."

"Oh! yes, Willie; let the war but end, and all will be forgotten."

"Ah! indeed! And he chuckles with the idea that his interposition then will alone save me from the gallows; and this, he fancies, will bring me to my knees! He dreams still as fondly as ever of the final triumph of the king?"

"That he does; and you would be surprised to hear him argue it out and prove it. To hear *him* first, and *you* afterward, I am left in a condition of perfect bewilderment. You are both so equally certain, and so satisfactory, that I believe neither of you. Not knowing where to steer, I am thus kept afloat, like a ship under opposing winds, sent to and fro, and never finding port or rest."

The major of dragoons laughed.

"Drop anchor, then, and take in sail, and let the winds exhaust themselves against each other. I shall see our father before I depart; that is, if I observe anything to encourage me to seek an interview; and then you may judge for yourself as to the respective force of the opposing currents. Meanwhile, that I may be justified for not showing myself just yet, you are to remember that these refugees are about the premises. That sneaking scoundrel Blodgit is with them, no doubt; and he knows the place too well not to render it highly probable that he will be prying about. I wish them to remain in doubt as to my presence here. This will cause delay, and keep them in the precinct."

"And why do you wish that, Willie?"

"For a reason, Carrie, in which you, I fancy, have a certain interest. I look to see Peyre St Julien here, in twelve hours! Bless me, Carrie, child, how your face reddens!"

"And why should my face redden, I'd like to know?"

"Nay, that's what *I'd* like to know! Explain!"

"Really, Willie, you are looking monstrous wise of a sudden."

"And you monstrous foolish! Fie, fie, Carrie, to try to keep such a secret from your brother, from your own Willie, who has always opened his heart to you, the moment he became conscious of having a single sensation in it." He had forgotten his own secret, and she was too much flurried to think of the obvious retort.

"Oh! Willie, I have never shut mine against you! Only—"

"Only in this instance, Carrie, when the bird you had caged in it was quite too precious to be exposed to any eyes."

"No! no! brother! It was I that told Peyre to tell you all. I did, indeed, Willie."

"Go! go! You are a foolish child! And why should you not have told me all *yourself*?"

"I don't know; I tried to do so when we parted last, but somehow—"

"Your heart failed you! Well, I suppose you have not ventured to be more communicative with our father than with me. He does not know how greatly Peyre St. Julien wishes to soar, does he?"

"No, indeed! How could I tell him?"

"Ah! Carrie! what a cruel fate is ours! That we should both run counter to all our papa's wishes. That we should both love where he would prefer to hate. That we should do those things that, in his creed, we are criminal to do; and leave those things undone which he holds essential to his proper religion! What an explosion there will be when he finds out *your* secret. Mine was nothing to it; for *you* were always his pet, Carrie; the apple of his eye—so perfect too—ha! ha! ha! Poor Carrie, when he finds *you* out!"

"Oh, don't speak of it, Willie; pray don't."

"How demure it makes you look!"

"Yes, Willie, it makes me very sad! to think how well he loves me, and that I dare not tell him all."

He took her proudly in his arms and kissed her.

"Be of good cheer, Carrie! all will come right. Have *faith*, child—what's love without faith and will? I have both. I love, and nothing doubt that I shall get the woman whom I love! True, there are impediments, but I will overcome them; rivals, but I will foil them; hostile papas, but I will soothe them. I may have to fight for my wife, and I mean to do it, as soon as the necessity shows itself for fight! But, this is one of the very groundworks of my faith. It is assured, by my own will to do all that is essential to the acquisition of its object! and I will fight for your little heart too, my Carrie, sonever despond! Have faith, child,—and, away now and see after your papa's and your brother's breakfast."

"But when, Willie, do you say, that St. Julien is coming?" asked Carrie, as she peeped obliquely at the mirror.

"Oh! you shall have ample time to make your toilet. Get you gone now, before the old man grows impatient."

The damsel disappeared. The brother remained alone. He seized the occasion to attend to his own toilet; a duty which he found very grateful of performance. This done, he was joined suddenly by our quondam friend, Little Peter, who opened the door cautiously, but without hesitation, and appeared, bringing in a covered basket, the contents of which, smuggled from the pantry, made the sufficient and palatable breakfast for our major of dragoons.

"Breck'us, Mass Willie," said Little Peter. Sinclair laughed out to see the disproportion between the large negro and the little basket:—the giant doing the duty of the dwarf. Peter laughed, also, from sympathy, never once suspecting the occasion of his young master's merriment.

"Peter, you must find that basket very heavy."

"No heabby 'tall, Mass Willie. Chile kin carry 'em."

Then, as the fellow caught the glance of his master's eye, he understood the ridicule, and, setting down the basket hurriedly, as if it were a snake, he forced himself into a second chuckle.

"And how's your master this morning, Peter?"

"Hah, Mass Willie!—ole maussa hab de fire in he foot. He's in berry bad sperrits dis morning—kin do not'ing but cuss and eat!"

"He has an appetite then, Peter?"

"Always kin eat when he cuss! He eat and cuss; and he dunno how much he eat and cuss!"

"You ought to tell him, Peter."

"Ki! Mass Willie; me tell ole maussa, how much he cuss and eat!" And the negro laughed fairly at the insanity of the suggestion.

"Well, Peter, let us see what you have for breakfast; for I too, have an appetite. Spread out your commodities, and clear out. You will be wanted behind your master's chair whenever he feels the necessity to swear!"

Peter grinned understandingly, as he obeyed the order to spread out the breakfast; then made a respectful bow, as saying, "all's ready;" but still lingered. Sinclair knew by this that he waited for more last words.

"Well, Peter, what would you say?"

"Benny Bowlegs say I mus'tell you, dere's two, t'ree, seben, fibe, strange white men bin by de ab'nue gate. He look like poor buckra and cattle-tief. He bin day dis morning, but he gone. Benny Bowlegs tell me, for tell you, dat he mus'hab some talk wid you when you done you breck'us."

"It must be *here*, then, Peter. Tell Benny to find some excuse for coming to me here, and to come as soon as he pleases."

"Oh! him kin come. I tell em:—"and, pulling at his wool-tuft, and scraping with his foot upon the floor, Little Peter disappeared. He had scarcely gone, when Benny Bowlegs, not waiting the permission he had solicited, entered the chamber also. He brought with him the holsters of his young master, wrapped up in the fragment of a blanket.

"I tink, Mass Willie," said he, "dat you better hab dese little bullpups yer, onder you own han'. Dere's no telling how soon you may want 'em. De swode is good 'nough, when you hab dem tory in chopping reach, but de pups kin keep guard on door and winder."

"What have you seen or heard, Benny?"

"I *see*, Mass Willie! I hab sight ob Hell-fire Dick, and two, t'ree, seben, fibe, udder hog and cattle tief, down by the ab'nue gate. I 'speck day must ha' bin see me too, for soon day gone clean out ob sight. I reckon day's all now cubber up in de woods below. Day's a watching, Mass Willie. Day's arter mischief dis mawning!"

"Did you see Pete Blodgit among them?"

"I nebber mek' out dat pusson; but I reckon he's jus' like de búzzard, always hab a nose when der's a bullock to be skin and clean."

"Exactly! Keep a look out for him! Remember, above all things, that he is not to have a notion that I am here! He must not see my horse, or saddle, or bridle, or anything that he will know as mine. And should he appear on the place, do you, or Little Peter, keep an eye on him all the while he is here; watch all his motions; and, should you see that he discovers anything, clap hands on him at once, *rope* him, and hide him away! Much depends on our blinding *his* eyes, Benny."

"I'd radder bung 'em up fair, right away!" said the truculent Benny Bowlegs, showing his enormous double fist, by way of indicating the *modus operandi* in such a performance.

"Well, you need not mince matters with such a scoundrel; only see that he makes no discoveries, and, should you suspect him of any, then instantly rope and lock him up; but not otherwise."

"Leff 'em to me, Mass Willie. I knows how to manage de warmint. Don't you t'ink, Mass Willie, you better hab a poun' or two ob dem powder and bullet you bring, yer in de house."

"Why, old fellow, you don't think we're to have a siege?"

"I don' know, Mass Willie, but when Hell-fire Dick's about, and hab t'ree, sebben, fibe pussons wid 'em, and der's no sodgers, red coats or blue, anywhar, in these parts, I reckon it's jest as well to be ready for de rapscallions."

"You are right, perhaps, Benny."

"I *knows* I'm right."

"Well, do as you please; but do not let your movements be seen or suspected."

Benny's only answer to this caution, consisted in lifting his forefinger to his left eye, and drawing down the lower lid. The action said as clearly as words could have done:—

"Noting green yer, maussa." Benny's experience and successes had been such, that nobody suspected him of an unwise vanity when he asserted his own wisdom and sagacity.

The interview ceased at this moment, and Benny disappeared, walking with singular erectness, like a well-drilled grenadier on parade. His ancient war spirit was returning fast.

Willie Sinclair was just finishing a formidable breakfast, when his sister Carrie reappeared;—little Lottie remaining with her father in the breakfast-room. Leaving brother and sister to a long conversation, of much mutual interest to themselves but none to us, let us now go forth, and see what progress has been made by our ruffianly acquaintances, whom we left in hot pursuit last night.

CHAPTER X.

THE OUTLAWS IN COUNCIL.

IT is apt to irritate the very best of people to be defeated in their calculations, to be disappointed in pleasant aims, and to find themselves baffled in properly-planned performances. The passions of our banditti, headed by All-fire Dick, are not of a sort to make them more placable than persons less ambitiously disposed. But we are not yet to speak of them as being disappointed of their prey. They had not, it is true, run down the fugitive, Sinclair, with his sack of guineas, to say nothing of those rolls of dingy continental money, which had been so painfully wrested from the keeping of Master Pete Blodgit. But, it was not supposed, by the most confident among them, that they would exactly run him down. They knew him to be something of the old soldier—very cool, brave, and crammed full with the lessons of experience. That they should be able to out-travel him, they knew; but, that he should suffer them to come up with him, on the high-road, was not a part of their calculations. The thing was possible surely; since a sleepy man, exhausted with fatigue, soaked with rain, suffering with hunger, is apt to be blind and deaf, particularly of a dark night. Therefore, he might have been "*overslaughed*," as he nodded onward, drowsing on his steed. But this was simply a something on the bare skirts of possibility, and formed but an humble feature among the calculations of our banditti.

To get ahead of the fugitive, cut him off from the Barony, then scour the woods below, in which he would be supposed to take shelter, and pick up their prey almost at their pleasure, this was their calculation; and a very good one too, had they been dealing with a timid man, or one wanting in experience and resources. But, as we have seen, they were defeated by a

very simple expedient; and, by the way, none but simple expedients are likely to be successful in moments of emergency.

But our banditti were not as yet to know that they had been defeated. They had no reason to suppose that our major of dragoons was *not* somewhere in the woods below. They were aware, of course, that there was a possibility that he had made such headway as to reach "the Barony" before themselves; since they knew not, exactly, at what moment he had fled from the stable-loft of Blodgit; nor could they measure the paces of his horse, except by some general estimate of his powers after a hard day's ride. Still, when they had attained the point at which they aimed, there was some feeling of disappointment, that they had not found some proofs by which to determine the question of his whereabouts.

In the cool of the morning hours, and before the dawn, we find them assembled, accordingly, in close proximity with the avenue leading to the mansion-house and settlements of Colonel Sinclair. They had skirted the avenue and fences, which cut off the cultivated fields from the natural forests. They had put themselves in such a position, along this line, as would discourage any but a desperate attempt, on the part of the fugitive, to make his passage upward. A bold man, they well knew, might attempt and do it, provided he were near enough; for they were too few in number to make the *cordon* perfect: but they relied on luck, their own agility, and the fact that the fugitive could not well know where they had severally disposed themselves. This done, there was a consultation.

Now, a consultation, whether in war or physic, is apt to produce a confusion of tongues; and our banditti, though somewhat coerced by the terrible authority maintained by All-fire Dick, was yet a free-spoken body, and there were some of the members who would always cavil even when compelled to submit.

"We've lost him, I reckon," said "Skin-the-Serpent," with an oath and growl; "and may as well hang up our fiddles for all the good that'll come of playing out of tune."

"Lost h--ll!" roared All-fire Dick. "What did you expect? Did you reckon he'd stand, and let us ride him down on the open track? Didn't we *know* that he'd take to the woods?"

"But how do we know that he's taken to the woods? How do we know that he ain't safely housed at the Barony at this very moment?"

"How do we know anything but by finding out? We've *got* to find out; that's all! But whether he's in the woods, or in the house, either way, I reckon, we've got him!"

"Got him! I don't see."

"What are your eyes good for, I wonder? For a fellow that knows how to use cold steel, I reckon, Skin-the-Serpent, you're about the most bull-headed of all the blind cattle, I know!"

"Well, Dick, let's hear what you're good for! What are you going to do?"

"There'd be no difficulty ef we had men enough, and men of the right kind. But what's to be done with fellows that begin the fight by dropping their tails? That's not the way to do anything! When I hear a man say, 'It's no use to try,' I'm for knocking him on the head at once; bekaise, I know, a man that sets out with that sort of sperrit, never does try with the whole heart of a man! What I wants of them that goes with me, is never to think it possible for the game to go agin us, tell he sees the stakes cleaned up and gone! A man musn't even believe he's dead, tell he feels the scalp off, and kain't lift a leg to kick. Now, in this business, I'll tell you what's to be done. Ralph Brunson must start off, right away, for Zeke Rodgers and his dogs. He's not quite five miles off. May be, he'll find some of our fellows thar besides. We don't want but a couplē here; for it's no use having too many to set down to a small dinner. But we must have Zeke, and his dogs, and a man or two more, ef he's got 'em with him. Meantime, we must skairt the avenue, and keep a lookout on all the crossings!"

"But, what ef we could find out ef Major Sinclair *has* got to the Barony?" said Skin-the-Serpent.

"Find out ef you kin! I don't see how you're to set about it, unless we had a man to spare to send in, as a traveller, with orders to look about him with a snake's eye, and see what's to be seen under the table. But we ain't half strong enough now, to watch the avenue and road rightly, or I'd send Joe Best.

'Twill take the whole four of us, mighty sharp-sighted and spry too, to kiver the roads, and watch the crossings."

At that moment, who should pop into the midst of the circle, but our amiable overseer, Master Pete Blodgit. He wore the most smiling face in the world, had heard every syllable that had been said, and had conceived the idea of making himself commendable to the outlaws, by volunteering to visit Zeke Rodgers, leaving Ralph Brunson to add to the resources of the party, on the watch; and, if need be, for the exploration of the Barony itself. Full of this idea, and never doubting that he should find a favorable reception from the outlaws, in their moment of acknowledged difficulty, the worthy Pete popped into the circle; but it would seem somewhat prematurely

The moment he became visible, All-fire Dick leaped upon him and seized him by the throat. The outlaw was equally vexed at being surprised, and followed.

"What the h-ll brought you hyar, you weasel-sperritted rascal, when I told you to keep off?"

And he throttled the skulk, with steely fingers, until the breath came out in a gurgle from his throat, along with broken syllables of entreaty.

"Lord ha' marcy! Oh!—I'm a-cho—choking!"

"What brought you hyar, you d—d skunk, when I told you not to come?" cried the ruffian, as he lurled the fellow to the earth and clapped his foot upon his neck.

"Ah! be marciful! be marciful! I jest come to lend a hand in case of needcessity."

"And what, in the name of —, kin sich a mean sneak and coward as you do, when it's a business that needs nothing but strong men only? You varmint! I know better what you come for! You thought there was to be some pickings, did you?—and you'd have found fingers enough, after we had found the flesh! But I'll slit your ears for you, you skunk!—I'll—"

And, with these words, the outlaw drew his knife, a monstrous *couteau de chasse*, worthy to compare with the bowie-knife of recent days; and, but for the interposition of "Skin-the-Serpent," it is beyond question that the ears—possibly the throat—of the intruder, might have been made to pay the

penalty of his impertinence; but "Skin-the-Serpent," who was not wholly the fool that All-fire Dick declared him, interposed, saying—

"Stop, Dick, the fellow *kin* do some sarvice! Hear what he's a saying. It's reason! *He* kin go for Zeke Rodgers and the dogs, and then Rafe Brunson kin go to 'the Barony,' and look about him thar."

"No! by thunder! Ef anybody's to go to the Barony, it's this mean sneak of a skunk. He's the right person to play the spy; he's got nateral recommendations for it; and, by the locus, he shall do it! Do you hear—eh?"

The suggestion, approved by the ruffians generally, was one which did not commend itself to the party most concerned. The quick fears of Pete Blodgit readily conceived the risk which he should incur, making his appearance at the dwelling, at the hands of Major Sinclair, should the latter have really reached the Barony in safety. Respited only from the knife of "All-fire Dick," and permitted to rise, he trembled with the dread of that redoubted person; yet he felt, intuitively, that, to accede to his requisition, was to incur almost as great a danger. To steer an evasive course is, in all such cases, the usual resort of imbecility.

"I reckon he ain't got to the Barony at all. His horse was most gin out, when he come last night. He couldn't ha' done it, no how! He's in the woods here, below, I'm sartin; and, ef you'll let me, I'll have Zeke Rodgers and his dogs here, in a short two hours."

"Did we ax you for your thinking, you eternal skunk?" was the reply of Dick, as he resumed his grasp upon the fellow's throat. "Look you, thar's only one question, and I don't care a button which way you answer it; for my knife itches to be at you, with a wipe that'll clean your ears close to the skull! Will you go ahead or not?" And his finger pointed to the avenue. Without waiting for his answer, the ruffian whirled him about, applied his foot emphatically to the person of the overseer, and said—

"Mount!"

Pete Blodgit was not the man for a prolonged resistance to the wishes of a superior. He unfastened his horse from the

swinging limb to which he had tethered him, mounted in silence, and then paused.

"Well! why ain't you off?"

"I wanted to hear what I must do."

"Snake through the settlement!—spy! Use your eyes and ears, and find out ef the man we're a'ter has got up. You didn't need to be told that. You know'd it well enough. You kin do it well too, ef you're a mind to, for that's the only business you're good for."

"But suppose he's thar?"

"Well! that's what we wants to know."

"But, I reckon, ef he's thar, he'll hardly be willing to let me come away agin."

"Why, what the —, will he want with such a critter as you?"

"He might make me a prisoner, or—"

"Hang you, you think!"

An involuntary shiver of the overseer showed the outlaw that he was on the raw of the difficulty. He proceeded:—

"Ef he hangs you, Blodgit, though we don't care the most eternal button for your hide, yet, as you goes on our business, we'll hang up every mortal man in the Barony, and on the same tree, to keep you company. Thar now! be off! No more words. Ef they makes you prisoner—that is to say, ef you ain't back agin in two hours—we'll look arter you! Thar's enough of us, I reckon, to grapple our way into them walls, and tear you away with our teeth! And we're the men to do it! So, don't be skeared! You'll come off safely with hair and hide. Be off, and do your sneaking like the old serpent in the garden."

Blodgit would still have lingered, having no just sense of the satisfactory or compensative, contained in the promise that, if hung, there should be company provided for him on the same tree; but Joe Best, a cool, quiet fellow, deliberately laid the lash of his whip over his shoulders with such emphasis as to settle instantly all further doubts on the part of the spy. He was off for the road and avenue on the instant.

"Them's the only argyments for sich a critter," was the commentary of the chief of the outlaws, which he accompanied

with a hearty chuckle. "And now, Ralph Brunson, do you be off at once for Zeke Rodgers and the dogs. We are not to stop doing till we hear from Blodgit. The truth is, the fellow stands a chance of getting roped in some way; sure, ef Willie Sinclair's got to the Barony. You see it's cl'ar that Sinclair's found Blodgit out. Well, he's jest the man to work his fingers jest as his idees work; and I shouldn't care a snap of *my* fingers ef he did knock the skunk of a fellow on the head."

"But then he's on *our* business, Dick," put in Skin-the-Serpent.

"Jest so! And, being on our business, ef he comes to any harm, we must see him righted! That's all cl'ar enough! What I meant was, that, as for any use that Pete Blodgit's to us, now that Sinclair's found him out, he's none; and 'twouldn't be of any consarn to us ef he *was* a hanging on the first tree, to-morrow! But we won't let him hang ef we kin help it, while he's working on our account; and we'll be as good as our word, in hanging as many others as we kin lay our hands on, in that blasted nobility consarn, ef so be they dare to put Pete Blodgit's neck out of j'int. That's jest now as sartin as ef I had sworn it under the pulpit. Let's be driving, now, Sarpent. We'll skairt the avenue and the lower fences, keeping close in the bushes as we go."

The remaining outlaws now took horse. Ralph Brunson had pushed off, almost as soon as ordered—exhibiting no such reluctance as Pete Blodgit. This latter worthy was making his way slowly to the dwelling, filled with many misgivings, and busily employed, mentally, in preparing the apologies for his conduct, should he find Major Sinclair at the Barony; and, in the event of his absence, a neat little narrative for the satisfaction of all other persons. Blodgit was not without a certain sort of genius. It was eminently foxy and skunkish, but of value and great use when practised upon those to whom the odor of either beast is yet unknown.

"Mass Willie," quoth Benny Bowlegs, peering into the chamber of Carrie Sinclair, where the major of dragoons still harbored, "sure as a gun, hyar's dat polecat, Pete Blodgit, a-coming up de ab'nue."

"See to him at once, Benny, and keep close upon his foot-

steps. See that he discovers nothing of me or mine. Keep him always in your sight, and remember, should he happen to make any discoveries, rope him, and shut him up!"

"Sure for dat, maussa!"

Benny was no sluggard. He moved off with the step and look of one who is equally prompt and determined. Certainly, if he has occasion to rope Blodgit—and he will not be slow to make the occasion—he will not be at pains to provide a silken garter. Five minutes after, he might be seen, with a significant plough-line in his hands, conducting the dubious overseer, with great apparent civility and attention, into the great hall where Colonel Sinclair, half reclining, half sitting, was nursing his podagra. But, before this presence could be reached, there were ceremonial restraints without number, none of which would the attentive Benny Bowlegs forego. He could spare none of the civilities due to so proper a person as Mr. Pete Blodgit.

"Fassen dat hoss of Misser Pete Blodgit to *t'odder* tree, you little black Toby," was the cry of Benny Bowlegs, to the white-shirted little son of sables, who stood at the portals.

"Never mind, Benny, t'will do thar, where I hitched him."

"Beg you' pardon, Misser Pete Blodgit," responded Benny, with dignity, "'twon't do dar at all! Dat tree is plant for grow, not for hoss to chaw! Colonel Sincklar see dat hoss fasened to dat tree, he will jist as lief cut dat hoss trote, right away, as look 'pon 'em. You yerry black Toby?—do as I tell you."

"Oh! yes! move him to the other tree, Benny, ef you think your master won't like him at that," was the consenting and rather eager response of Blodgit, whose desire was by no means to see the knife of the colonel and the weasand of his horse more intimately acquainted.

Cut he trote, for true!" muttered Benny, "ef he cotch 'em dar."

"The colonel's well, Benny, I reckon?"

"I reckon *not* edzactly, Misser Pete Blodgit: he's jest sick enough to be all-fired skittish. You'll jes' be preticklar, Misser Pete Blodgit, wha' you guine say to 'em, for dis is de time wid 'em nebber to 'top t'ink wha' sawt ob answer he guine mek'; and he jest as leab speak to you wid de little gould-headed

knob ob he walking-'tick, as wid de civility ob de tongue! Please 'member Misser Pete Blodgit, sence I no wants to carry you down to you hoss wid you head all bloody, and maybe a break somewhar in you tighbone or arm!"

"Thank you, Benny; I'll be mighty considerant of his situation."

"Better for you, das all!"

Blodgit, at the entrance, seemed disposed to hesitate. The door was open before him.

"Dis de way, Misser Pete Blodgit; you must 'member ob old, I reckon."

"Oh! yes, Benny, I reckon I knows all about the Barony, jest as well as them that lives here."

"Yes, Misser Pete Blodgit, I reckon you does! You always was mighty quick to look 'bout you wherebber you goes; and, sometimes, I reckon you look jes' whay people don't want you to set you eyes."

Blodgit felt that there was something in this speech offensively suggestive, and it ruffled him a little. He replied rather quickly:—

"Well, I spose I had a right to look jest where I did."

"Now, look yer, Misser Pete Blodgit, better you don't say not'ing to ole maussa 'bout *you rights*, and all dat sawt ob ting; kaise, you see, he's a gentleman what don't blieb berry much in de rights ob poor buckrah; and ef you talks to him 'bout you right to look 'bout him, whay you please, you know wha' he guine say?"

"What will he say, Benny?"

"Well, he will say, 'Jes' so, Misser Pete Blodgit, it's you right to spy, may be, but it's my right for knock you on de head for spy in my house!' Das wha' he guine to say; and I tell you, Misser Pete Blodgit, he guine do wha' he say, sure as t'under."

"Well, I don't think he'll knock *me* down, Benny, for I ain't a-guine to talk about my rights to spy in any man's place. I don't spy, Benny, that's not my business."

"I berry grad for yerry you say so, Misser Pete Blodgit; and now, ef you say you wants to see ole maussa, dar's de paat' [path] open for you."

And, with a very lordly air, Benny waved his hand to the open entrance, and Blodgit passed in, rather demurely, and with his uneasiness somewhat increased by the suspicious courtesies and sinister warnings of Ben Bowlegs. To the uninitiated and unobservant, we may mention here, that, had Blodgit been at all in favor with the negro, the latter would have styled him Mass Pete, or maussa;—the “Misser Pete Blodgit” was very decidedly ceremonial, and it did not escape the notice of the overseer. But no time was given him for reflection. Once in the great passage, he was in sight from either of the two large rooms which opened upon it, in one of which Colonel Sinclair might be seen, half reclined upon an easy-chair, with his game-leg stretched out upon a cushioned stool before him. His gold-headed cane lay on the table, convenient to his grasp; and the massive knob on the top of it, marked with its owner's crest and initials, appeared to Blodgit to have grown prodigiously in its dimensions since he last had the satisfaction of looking upon it.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BARON.

BLODGIT entered the presence with a manner studiously apologetic ; the humility of which, however, was quite unaffected. He could not shake off the sense of that habitual awe, of the lordly superior, in which he had been reared ; and he now stood, cap in hand, shoulders bent, foot awkwardly scraping, and a half-silly, half-smiling visage, which was designed to be very conciliatory.

Col. Sinclair was one of the despots of the old school ; a gentleman no doubt among gentlemen ; but a lord to all others ; — a man capable of generosity in high degree, and condescension ; but one who expected that you should understand his condescension, and feel his generosity. He was, really, a person of a century even older than his own ; and though he fully believed in Adam and Eve, as the parents of that prolific family vulgarly recognised as the human, yet no priesthood in the world could have persuaded him that there were not a great many varieties of clay employed in the moulding of those myriad varieties which constitute the sum total of the races of men ! He had swayed as a superior so long, and as a natural superior, that it was not possible with him to question his own legitimacy, or to acknowledge the claims of that fungus multitude, which it needed another hundred years to raise, in any degree, to a fairly human position. He really meant no scorn, or contempt, when, without turning his head, or answering the reverence of the overseer, he said :—

“ Well, what is it you want, Blodgit ? What brings you here without being sent for ? ”

These words, uttered by stentorian lungs—for in that day *empressment* in voice and manner was by no means held to be vulgar among the Carolina aristocracy — sustained by a lordly

look, from brows of size and authority,—white head, ruddy cheeks, and a face originally nobly handsome,—to say nothing of a fine physique, broad shoulders, massy form, and the loftiest stature—these words, so uttered, and from such a person, had the effect of additionally staggering the doubtful confidence of the overseer; who twirled his cap, and slightly receded, and muttered something unintelligibly.

“Speak out like a man, fellow! What the devil scares you? You have something to say? Out with it, and no long talk!”

Thus urged, Blodgit made an effort.

“Well, colonel, you see, I come about the major.”

“The major! and who’s the major, I pray?”

“Why, Major Willie Sinclair, sir, your son—”

“And who authorized you, sirrah, to speak to me about that young man? and who told you that I was prepared to hear of him, and to recognise him in any military authority which was not recognised by his sovereign and mine? Do you suppose, sir, that I am the man to tolerate his or your impertinence? I know you to be one of his rapsallion followers; but sirrah, it will be time enough to thrust him, or them, upon my presence, when I am prepared to summon them. If you have nothing better to speak of, depart! I desire to hear nothing of my son, or of his elegant companions.”

Listeners are said to hear but little good of themselves at any time. Willie Sinclair was not in a situation to render the proverb an erring one in his case. He was in the adjoining room with his sister; not there, as a listener to his father, by any means, but only of what should fall from the lips of Master Pete Blodgit. He smiled, grimly enough, as he heard the complimentary tenor of the old man’s speech.

Blodgit was nearly reduced to desperation at the determined rejection of his only topic, by the person whom he sought; and, in his despair, as is usual in such cases, he resorted to exaggeration in order to compel attention:—

“Don’t want to make you angry, Col——”

“Then don’t make me angry!”

“That’s it, colonel!—I don’t want to make you angry—but you see, last night—”

“Well, what of last night?”

“Why, sir, you see——”

“Stop sir—a moment!—what do you mean by lingering here, Benny? are you wanted in the house? Is n’t your proper place in the fields, old fellow?”

Benny, it must be remembered, had assigned him the special duty of keeping Blodgit constantly in sight. He had suffered himself to appear more than once in his master’s presence, unnecessarily, it would seem, in the performance of this duty. But he had no such reasons as Blodgit for showing himself abashed. He answered the inquiry steadily, with the confident freedom of one who not only knows his own honesty of purpose, but who feels sure of its general recognition.

“Proper place sometime in de fields, maussa; sometime in de house! Proper place whar de officer ob de day puts me; and when he don’ know ’bout de position ob de inimy, den proper place whay I puts myself, to do sarbice!”

“You are a vain old rascal, Benny; and will fancy yourself a soldier. Beware how you come within reach of my cane, old fellow.”

“Hah! Mass Kurnel; der’s pussons in dis wurl, and a many ob am too, dat ought to taste dat cane long ’fore he reach de shoulders of dis nigger! I hab business yer, Mass Kurnel;—I hab inquisitions for Misser Pete Blodgit, whenebber you done wid ’em; der’s some cattle business atwixt us.”

“Very well! You can wait with your ‘inquisitions.’ It is Mister Pete Blodgit that has to do with me. Go on now, sir. You will perceive that I have no claim upon your attention, while my servant has.”

“Blodgit’s desperation—and vexation too—had increased duly, during this little episode; and with the air of a man resigned to his fate, he blurted out:—

“Well, kurnel, all I’ve got to say is jest this, that ef your son, the major, aint got safely here last night, or maybe by daylight this morning, then it’s a mighty hard thing to say that he’ll ever get here at all again! It’s a despret likely chance that they’ve cotched and murdered him along the road!”

“Caught! Murdered!—Willie murdered!” And the old man caught up his staff, and made a desperate effort to rise, but fell back in the fruitless attempt, while a sharp cry attested the

acute spasm which wrung his foot—possibly his heart,—at that moment. In an instant, Carrie Sinclair rushed in from the interior, where she had remained *perdu* with her brother, and unloosed the old man's cravat, while she cried—

“Oh! don't believe it! It's all false. Willie's in no danger, father! He's not murdered!”

“Then he got here, safe, ma'am?” inquired Blodgit eagerly, his eye straining upon hers.

The ready wit of the maiden came to her rescue. The eager inquiry taught her of the near approach which she had made to the revelation of her secret.

“Got here!” she exclaimed, turning to the spy. “Then where is he? Why do we not see him? Go, good Blodgit, and bring him to us at once.”

“Jes' you tell me, whay for fin' 'em, Pete Blodgit. I kin go fetch 'em ef you tell me whay for look?” So spoke brave Benny Bowlegs.

“That's jest what I kaint do, now; for I came here, you see, to look a'ter him, and see ef he was safe. I know'd them bloody chaps wor' a'ter him last night; fur I heard 'em a-screaming up the road jest a'ter the major pushed off; and ef they cotched him, with the heap of guineas he had about him, I reckon they'd make no bones of putting a bullet into him, or a knife.”

“And who dem people bin?” demanded Benny, with an air of the most perfect sincerity.

“Who, but the most savagest of all the tories in these parts—Hell-fire Dick, and Skin-the-Serpent, and Rafe Brunson, and Joe Best, and, I reckon, thar' was others too, and they had dogs.”

The old man groaned convulsively; then seemed to recover, and, feebly speaking, though with quite a determined effort at composure, he said—

“And so you know nothing more, Mr. Blodgit?”

“Not the weight of a feather, colonel. I pushed off at peep o' day to see a'ter him; but there was nothing and nobody to be seed anywhar. Thar' wor' hoof-marks enough 'long the road, so thar' war' no telling. I reckon, the major hadn't time to stop, and pushed on above, and they a'ter him. Ef he ain't here, he's may be gone above.”

The faintest possible smile turned the corner of Benny Bowlegs' mouth, like a little errant sunbeam through the woods peeping into a country smithy; but he soon heaped over it all the charcoal in his complexion, and it totally escaped Blodgit's vision. His faculty was in the discovery of material matters only. By this time, the redoubtable colonel had begun to recover some of his strength and soldiership.

"What a d—d condition it is to be in! This cursed foot!" and he looked down upon the member—so much more sinned against than sinning—with some such look as the axe might be supposed to have worn when it bit down through the purple arteries of fair Anne Boleyn's neck. He continued—no doubt perceiving how very idle it would be to waste his epithets of anger on his own foot—turning to Blodgit—

"And you, a man grown, with gun and rifle in your hands—you allowed the wretched boy to be shot down and butchered in your sight, without so much as lifting weapon?"

"Lord bless you, kurnel, I didn't see it, nor them. I jest hearn them and their dogs, as they went by, full speed, a'ter the major, and he with all that money!"

"The rebel to his king! He deserves his fate; but you!—you could wait till daylight, before you came to give the alarm, instead of dashing after them!"

"Why, Lord, kurnel, what was I to do, and a lame man too, ag'in the most powerful, strong fighting-men of all the tories—"

"Loyalists, sirrah! loyalists! Though, by the way, these fellows of whom you speak are mere outlaws—"

"I reckon, you're right thar!"

"Le' me ax you, Misser Pete Blodgit, whay Mass Willie bin git all dem guineas?"

"Well, he got a smart chainece of them from me. I reckon, going on to a hundred; and, I reckon, he had as many more besides from other people."

"And where did you get a hundred guineas?" demanded the colonel.

"Why, kurnel, from the corn and fodder, you see, and the kaives, and other things. The bettermost part b'longed to Miss Carrie here, that I had killected for her from sales."

"And tell me, Missir Pete Blodgit, how dem blackguard gem-

plemen come for know Mass Willie hab all dat heap o' guinea?" asked Benny, with a grave slyness and squint of eye.

"How they know'd? Well, I reckon they had a suspicion of it: they *reckon'd* he wan't a travelling about with nothing to go upon. But I don't know that they know'd at all!"

We must suppose a good many other questions asked and answered after a fashion; but, it will be readily understood, that, during the whole investigation, there was a certain constraint over all the parties, with the exception of the colonel. The daughter and Benny Bowlegs could not reveal their secret; and Blodgit, from policy, kept his. The task before the daughter was a severe one: to see her father suffer—to hear his involuntary groan of anguish—to witness the struggle between his pride, and the deep-seated but suppressed affections in his heart—and to remain silent, when it was in her power, by a single word, to relieve him of all his mental suffering at least!

"What is to be done?" moaned, rather than spoke the father, forgetting all his Roman resolutions. "Would to God, I were able to take the saddle!"

He looked inquiringly at Blodgit, but turned away with a sickening gesture.

"Nothing from him!" he murmured despondingly. Suddenly his eye caught that of Benny Bowlegs. "Ha! what's to prevent *you*? You are able to mount horse, and use sabre, if needs be; and there is Little Peter, who will fight for Willie too! How is it, Ben, that I have to say to you—'Go and find Willie Sinclair, living or dead, and bring him to his father!'"

"De Lawd in heabben be praise, maussa! I gone! Come, Misser Pete Blodgit; we kin go togedder; me, you, and Little Peter. We kin all go togedder—by differen' roads. You ride *down*, Misser Pete Blodgit; and little Peter and me, *one*, will ride *up*. When you gits in de tick [thick] woods you scatter *you* men; and me and Peter will scatter *we two*, and s'arch ebbrywhare!"

This very definite arrangement chimed in with Blodgit's desires. He had no wish that the negro, whom he somewhat feared, should accompany him below. He was satisfied that Willie Sinclair was *not* at the Barony. The old man's agony could not have been simulated. He had fulfilled his task suf-

ficiently—satisfactorily, as he thought—and there was nothing in the eye of Colonel Sinclair, or that of his daughter, which encouraged him to remain. Of course, he bowed himself out as reverently as he came, the colonel scarcely heeding his expressions of devotion and adieu; and Benny Bowlegs was particularly careful to escort the overseer to his nag, and see him on his way. He had ordered horses, in the hearing of Blodgit, for himself and little Peter; and when the former rode off, he repeated his instructions for that “s’arch below” in which Blodgit was to scatter himself abroad, for the thorough exploration of the ‘thick’ forests. The spy, once out of sight, Benny had his horses quietly put back into the stables.

Meanwhile, the old warrior, the stoical philosopher, the Roman father, relieved of the presence of the stranger, buried his face in his hands with a terrible burst of anguish, exclaiming in the very words of the minstrel monarch—

“My son! my son! would God that I had died for thee, my son!”

The tears gushed from Willie Sinclair’s eyes in his place of hiding, where he had heard every syllable. He could scarce contain himself; and it required a prodigious effort to avoid rushing forth and throwing himself at his father’s feet. But Carrie Sinclair, twining her arms about the old man’s neck, exclaimed—

“Oh! father, do not fear! There is nothing to fear! It is *not* true that brother is in any danger! Willie has escaped the outlaws!”

“Ha! ha! escaped, has he? Escaped! are you sure of it? How do you come to know?”

“Benny is sure of it, father! He knows! He is certain!”

“If Benny is certain, I am satisfied! Escaped the bloodhounds, has he? Ah!—” A long deep moan of relief. This over, ~~he~~ ^{he} looked up angrily—“And why did neither of you tell me this before? Why did you suffer me to expose myself before that reptile?”

“It was because Benny had reasons, father, for keeping that very person in ignorance of our knowledge.”

“Benny is becoming too strategical by half! Why the mystery? Is not this fellow, Blodgit, in the employ of Willie

Sinclair? What good reason is there for keeping *him* from a fact in which he is naturally interested. Did he not show his interest, in the very act of coming here in search of him?"

Benny reappeared at this very moment, and heard and understood the remark.

"Shet up, maussa," he said coolly, "and no bodder yourself wid dis transaction. You hab 'nough to bodder you. 'Tis 'nough, I tell you now, dat dem d—n skunk, dat run Mass Willie last night, no hab de nose for follow! He git shet ob dem! I know! I see! I bin talk wid 'em myself dis morn'ing, by times, so help me God!"

"You did! You spoke with Willie this morning?"

"Jes' so! A good hour 'fo' daylight."

"And Willie talked with you?"

"Jes' so! I yerry 'em talk."

"And you spoke with him?"

"Zackly! I tell 'em heap o' tings."

"You saw him, too, with your eyes open?"

"Jes' so, maussa! and feel 'em wid my open han!"

"Ah! to feel his wounds! He was hurt?"

"He no hab hu't [hurt] anywhar! I shake he han's, like one gempleman shake han' wid 'noder gempleman; and I feed 'em! I gi' 'em someting for eat."

"And he ate!—did he?—you saw him eat?"

"Like a mighty 'trong [strong] man, wid a mighty sharp 'tomach, maussa."

"Ha! ha! ha! He had an appetite, had he?"

This was said with a convulsive chuckle. In a moment after, with changed voice—

"And why, you d—d rascal, do you tell me these things? What is it to me whether the rebel you speak of has an appetite or not? Do you suppose I care a straw whether he can speak with you or not; can see you or not? or whether you see or speak with him? I wish to hear nothing of this sort in future! Carrie, my child, you will please remember my wishes. As for you, you sooty rascal, begone from my sight! Do not come within reach of my stick! Do not let me see you again to-day!"

Benny Bowlegs walked out very composedly, a grin mantling

his visage as soon as his back was turned. Carrie Sinclair went up to her father; but he repulsed her gently. His eyes were moist, and his face was in an instant covered in his hands. Willie Sinclair peeped through the half-opened door at him, while he sate in this position; but he did not venture to approach. The son's eyes were very full of tears, when his sister rejoined him, and in her chamber they retired to weep together for awhile; in which performance, we may add, that Willie Sinclair was soon very fast asleep.

CHAPTER XII.

HELL-FIRE DICK ENGAGES IN A NEW VENTURE.

IT was by no means a difficult task with Pete Blodgit—a fellow very well versed in woodcraft—to find the traces of the scouting party under “All-fire Dick,” and to make his way to the spot where they harbored. He first encountered “Skin-the-Serpent,” whom he accompanied until they came up with Joe Best; and the three then rode on together till they found the leader of the gang, who was more deeply buried in the woods. Ralph Brunson had not yet returned with Zeke Rodgers and his bloodhounds, and Dick, the captain, was fast becoming impatient, in his eagerness to begin the chase.

In a thick copse, some half a mile in the rear of the garden of the Barony, the whole party assembled; and here, all alighted, and our overseer made his report. His conviction, that Willie Sinclair had not yet succeeded in making his way to the mansion-house, was naturally that of the group; and they now longed for nothing so eagerly as the arrival of Brunson, Rodgers, and the dogs, in order to run down the fugitive with his burdensome bag of guineas. To beat the woods, or make any alarm, until the hounds and the additional force of hunters were put on the scent, was no more their policy than it would have been had their game been the royal buck himself. But, while they all declared their impatience at the delay, a new and bolder idea seized upon All-fire Dick, induced by some of the particulars given by Blodget, in his narration of what happened on his visit. Dick, the Diabolical, had listened for a while in silence; but now put in:—

“You say,” said he to the overseer, “that the old man kain’t move his timbers?”

“Kain’t stir a peg, no more than ef he had no legs at all. Thar he sets in a big chair with soft cushions; and his legs lay

on a bench covered with soft pillows; and he sets by the table; and his gould-headed stick lays on the table easy to his hands. Jest so I left him. When he wants to move, Little Peter lifts him about from place to place."

"The dem'd old rascal! He was always trying to look like a sort of king!" exclaimed Skin-the-Serpent.

"Jest so! and he never had a good word yit for a poor man! He talked to me jest as ef I was no better than a nigger."

"Well! he's rich, I reckon!" quoth Dick.

"Rich as a Jew, they say; but that don't give him any Christian right to talk to a poor man as ef he was a nigger."

"Yes! a rich man has a right to talk as he pleases! and you knows it; and you feels it! Ef you didn't, why didn't you clap a stopper on his mouth when he talked to you as ef you was a nigger?" was the retort of Dick.

"I'd like to know how I was to do that?"

"You'd like to know! Why, a man naterally knows, when he's got the heart of a man beating in his buzzum! Hadn't you your arms, and hands, and feet; and wan't you armed with a whip; and hadn't you a knife in your belt; and wan't he *thar*—before you, disabled as I may say—onable to lift a limb to help himself agin an inimy?"

"Yes, but *thar* was that double-j'inted nigger, Benny Bow-legs;—a fellow that's as strong as a horse, and ain't afeard of the devil; and didn't I know that Little Peter was nigh about, too? and he's as strong as Benny, and he ain't afeared neither! Ef I had lifted finger agin the kurnel, they'd ha' mounted me right away; and I couldn't ha' held a hand agin them two! If it hadn't been for *them*, I'd ha' soon showed the old kurnel that he wan't to hev' his own way always. I thought of giving him a wipe with a hickory towel more than once."

"You thought of it, did you!" quoth the outlaw chief, with a look expressive of the fullest disgust. "And I tell you, Pete Blodgit, that you'd no more have thought of lifting we^opon agin ole Sinclair, disabled as he is, so long as his eyes was upon you, than you'd ha' thought of fighting a whole British rigiment! It wan't the niggers that kept you from trying your hands upon him; but 'twas his eyes upon *your'n*; and your own cowardly sperrit; and what you knowed of him of old: for, impudent as

he is, and a tyrant all over, there's no denying that he's got spunk enough to fight the devil. But *I* ain't afeared of him; and I never seed the nigger yit that had the impidence to look into my eyes; and I'll go and and hev' a talk with the old rascal, and see what *I* can make out of him?"

"You go—to 'the Barony'?—and what for?" said Skin-the-Serpent, suspiciously. "The young fellow ain't thar!"

"But the old one is?"

"Well, but it's neither the old one nor the young one that we wants—it's the guineas."

"Jest so, Sarpent, and it's the guineas that I'm arter. Thar must be smart pickings in that old house, I'm a thinking. The colonel's rich as a Jew. Why, the very stick that he walks with has as much as five guineas on the head of it! And I reckon thar's a chist of gould and silver put away somewhar about, and the young woman has her jewels and fine things."

Well, but how are you to git at them?"

"That's for me to find out! I wants to see how the land lies; and what Blodgit tells us, shows that it's mighty easy, jist now, to do so. I wouldn't like to come sudden up with the old kurnel, ef he had his limbs and strength, and we'pons at hand; but, you see, he ain't able to stir a peg, and I takes him by surprise. The niggers I ain't afeared of; and don't you hear what Blodgit says, that they've started off, jest now, when he did, to beat the upper woods a-s'arching arter the body of the major? Ha! ha! ha! s'arching arter the dead body of a man what's alive and kicking. Well! don't you see that it's a first-rate chainece, jest now, to look into the premises, and see what there is worth picking up."

The adventure became suddenly very plausible in the eyes of the group. Skin-the-Serpent, in particular, seemed disposed to abandon the hunt of the son, in order to do honor to the father. They all began to suspect that the shares of Dick were to be unnecessarily large.

"It won't do for you *one* to go. We kin *all* go. I reckon there'll be more than all of us kin bring away!" So spoke Skin-the-Serpent.

Even Blodgit was not unwilling to return to the Barony; following, Jackal-fashion, in the wake of the proper beasts of

prey. But Dick's genius over-ruled the rest with its usual potency.

"'Twon't do! That's jist the way with you! You'd all start off, after the *fresh* deer, though you were on the hot scent of the old one, and jist about to run him down! And you'd go to the Barony, and be loading yourself down with more than you could carry; so that if an inimy should git upon your track, you'd have neither the heart to fight, nor the heels to run. It's the baggage-wagons that half the time defeats the army. Now, I'm not for gutting 'the Barony,' I'm for picking up only what I can safely put away; nice little things by way of ornament; rings, and seals, and breastpins, and the like; as many watches and silver spoons, as will lie snug together in coat and breeches pocket; and as large a bag of gould as will set easy on a nag's quarters. It may be that there's no gould at the house to be got at. They hide away sich matters pretty closely; and then the old kurnel's sich a d—d obstinate colt, that he'd never tell, even though you was a-cutting his tongue out with a sheep's scissiors. But we know that the *young one* has the pure kinage [coinage] in guineas, to the tune of one hundred, or thereabouts, and we know that he's in these woods; and hyar [here] you must watch and wait till Brunson and Rodgers come in with the dogs; and, by that time, I hopes to be back with you and take a hand in the hunt! It's only a short wisit that I means to pay the kurnel; and if the men and dogs were ready, hyar, I shouldn't think of going to 'the Barony.' But I kaint bear to be sucking my thumbs. I must be a-doing; and one hour or so kaint spile our chainces in the hunt after the young buck."

Of course, he silenced opposition, as was his wont. He gave his instructions in brief terms. His plans had been promptly conceived, as is always the case with the determined will.

"Hyar," said he, "we're half a mile only to the back of the garden; and the garden's but a small distance to the house. I'll only have to pull down a few rails to get into the grounds, and there's a smart sprinkling of trees, that 'll cover me pretty close till I gets nigh to the building. Look for me baick in a short hour and a-hafe! Keep the dogs close till I come! Skairt the line of fences. Keep one of the fellows stationed near the road at Fryar's Bend. All that you've got to do is

jest to keep the young one from gitting above you. That's all!"

"S'pose something should happen to you, Dick?" suggested Skin-the-Serpent.

"What's to happen?"

"Why, s'pose the kurnel's got a we'pon hid away close at hand? He's an old sodger you know."

"You hear Pete Blodgit says he haint! Why should he? He don't think there's any danger. He don't calkilate our chainces just now, when both armies is so far above. But, if I aint back here in a short hour and a-hafe, then, prehaps, you'd better ride up in a body, and ax after me. That's the how!"

With these words, having satisfied all scruples, silenced all objections, completed his instructions, the outlaw departed on his audacious adventure.

He rode a powerful steed, not so showy as useful, and he was a dextrous and fearless rider. Suppose, in his case, as in that of most of the common people of this country, that the costume of our Dick of Tophet was of ordinary blue homespun, trowsers and hunting shirt, yellow fringed, a rough and ragged coon-skin cap;—that he was weaponed with broadsword and pistols, like a regular dragoon;—as, indeed, he *had* been—and on both sides of the war;—and that his hirsute visage was just as savage as a wild grin, a sabre cut, untrimmed beard, unkempt hair, and a general scorn of appearances could render it;—and you can conceive sufficiently of the sensation which such a visiter will surely make when he penetrates the parlor of Sinclair's "Barony."

CHAPTER XIII.

NEW SIGNS IN THE SKY.

BUT the slumbers of our dragoon were slight and soon broken. Very brief was the respite which Willie Sinclair had seized from the necessities of war, in which to visit the old familiar places of his childhood, and once more to embrace the sisters of his love. It was, of course, a great qualification of his happiness that he was not permitted to approach his father; as the reader will have already inferred, from our hurried sketching, he was, in great degree, an outcast from the affections of the old man. Not that the terms between them had produced the formal banishment of the son; but that they were of such a nature, as to embitter their interviews when they met, with such sharp and biting controversies, as made it prudent for the young man to keep aloof. For months they had not met.

The father, a devoted loyalist, was naturally aroused to extremest anger, because of his son's active alliance with the cause of the American patriots. That he had had frequent successes, and had been honored with rapid promotion, in consequence, was rather an aggravation of his offence than an appeal to the paternal *amour propre*. When he heard of him, as he did occasionally, it was always to provoke his ire, no matter what the tidings. The report of his son's valor and ability, however grateful it might be in itself, was by no means a subject of exultation, when these qualities were exercised against the sovereign, for whose authority the old man entertained an almost religious reverence. But, even this cause of anger, sufficient in itself, was increased by another, in the misplaced affections of the young man. Colonel Sinclair was a natural aristocrat. His conventional world had confirmed the despotic character of his mind, and trained him to regard the family con-

nections as involving a degree of scrupulosity, which forbade entirely the possibility of unequal alliances. Blood was always, with him, a chief consideration in the affairs of the affections; but he made the conditions of blood to depend, as is the too common error with all such persons, upon genealogical proofs merely;—never once recognising that beautiful property in Nature, by which she is continually repairing exhausted fountains, by turning in upon them new streams, from sources of strength and virtue, which have not hitherto been known. The repair of broken cisterns from vulgar clays, is, in fact, one of her great remedial processes, for the regeneration and the saving of decaying stocks. But Col. Sinclair was not a philosopher, and between his passion and his pride, he was not in a mood to acknowledge the force of any argument which told in behalf of a son who had already offended both. He had then, as we have seen, cut himself off, temporarily, from the gratification of that precious human feeling, which might have gathered new life from, and yielded new delights in return for, the embrace with an heir who had sufficiently shown, to the eyes of all other persons, that the family name was destined to receive new distinction, and not discredit, from his performances. The old man sate lonely, therefore; brooding sadly, in a still continued struggle between his wounded pride, and the only half-hidden, but fond affection, which lay warm and watchful about his heart. His was the self-torturing sort of nature which perpetually exercises itself in irritating its own hurts of mind or body.

It is not to be denied that Willie Sinclair had that morning found a grateful proof of this lurking sentiment of love, on the old man's part, in the agony which he betrayed when first told of his son's danger and possible death. He enjoyed, in that spectacle, renewed securities in behalf of that parental affection which no son had ever valued more; and, with his own heart bounding with gratitude, and his own eyes overflowing with tears, it must be forgiven to him that he joyed in the old man's burst of anguish which spoke much more truly the feelings in his bosom than the words which ordinarily fell from his tongue.

"He loves me still—his heart is in the right place!" the youth said to his sister when they were alone together in her chamber.

"Oh! yes! I felt, all the while, Willie, that it must be so, in spite of all his violent speeches. Though, really, it was sometimes terrible to hear him. It was his gout, I suspect, that made him so bitter of speech; and the visit of Captain Travis took place, unhappily, just when he was most suffering. He has besides some very strong prejudices against that person."

"He has reason for them. He knows the weaknesses and errors of Captain Travis, whose passion is a love of money, as that of my father is family pride. I am sorry to admit that, in the indulgence of this passion, Captain Travis has not always shown himself scrupulous of propriety. It is the knowledge of some of his mal-practices, while on the Cherokee expedition, that makes my father hold him in such scorn. But Bertha will reconcile him, when he comes to know *her*. She is one of the purest of living creatures, and with so much power too—such thought as well as purity—such strength as well as grace and beauty—that I feel sure of her influence over him, as soon as she has the opportunity allowed her of acting upon his sense of truth and justice. She will disarm him, I am very sure."

"Yes," said Carrie, with a brightening face, taking her brother's hand, "for, Willie, with all his prejudices, father is just in the end—only give him time and all will be right."

"Yet he has tried me very severely, Carrie," responded the brother very gravely.

"Ah! Willie, he has tried himself still more; and you, brother, you, too, have tried *him*! Think of his loyalty—that he has borne the king's commission—how he prided himself upon it, and how keenly he must feel the course you have pursued in taking up with the liberty party. And then, think of the trial to his social pride when he heard of this engagement with Bertha Travis. It seemed to him, Willie, as if you were trying all ways to crush and mortify him."

"Ah, Carrie, you are right to teach me that the argument has two faces. It has been so natural and easy to think, all the while, that I was the one whom he sought to crush and humble."

"But you must think so no more, Willie. You see, now, what are his real feelings. Give him time, I do not despair of seeing him as fond of your Bertha, as you are yourself; if"—

here she smiled and pressed his hand — “if, indeed, she answers the description you give of her.”

“What! you fancy my painting that of a self-deluded lover?”

“A little!”

“And I the most matter-of-fact person in the world; cool, cautious, calculating, with no more fancy than a plough-horse.”

“I suppose a plough-horse has his fancies, when out of the traces, and after an hour’s browsing in pleasant pastures. I give you an equal degree of credit. I suppose, could he speak, he would indulge in superlatives about his elysium — nay, no more protestations! Enough, Willie, that she is *your* favorite. That is enough to make her mine — to make me believe very much as you desire.”

“Well, I hope for an early opportunity to enable you to judge for yourself. You will, all of you, in all probability, be compelled to cross the river and retreat to the hills of Santee. The war will soon approach this quarter. Rawdon is on his retreat. Greene will press upon his heels. Orangeburg must be one of the places which he will seek to hold, at all hazards, — for a time, at all events — and there will then be no possibility to escape a battle. You will have to remove from this neighborhood, which will then be covered with the troops of both parties in turn. Captain Travis will be under a like necessity of getting his family out of the way; and, unless he is more deeply committed to the British than I believe, you will probably meet on the hills.”

“Do you suppose father will leave the Barony because of this approach of war? He will spurn the idea. It will be difficult to persuade him that he will not find perfect safety under the British Lion.”

“We must teach him the absurdity of such a notion *now* — and we can. The day of his perfect faith in British prowess is pretty much gone by. He can not deceive himself much longer as to the result of this struggle.”

“Ah! I don’t see that! *He will not* see it! He does not believe your assurances, or that of your party; and the British maintain appearances well. When Lord Rawdon was here last, and father expressed his anxieties in respect to the successes of Marion and Sumter, my lord laughed at them; spoke of them

with perfect contempt; insisted upon them as gross exaggerations,—the small performances of a petty outlawry which would be crushed at once, were they not almost too insignificant for attention.”

“And my father believed him?”

“He could not less. He *desired* to believe him; and his lordship seemed to be of unquestionable authority. The raising of the siege of Ninety-Six confirms him in the belief.”

“He knows not then of the British abandonment of the post as soon as Greene was driven off. He will yet see fearful proofs of the fruits of this abandonment. Under the escort of Cruger, more than two thousand of the wretched loyalists, men, women, and children, their entire families, are on their way to the seaboard. The British are no longer able to protect them in their homes. Post after post is thus abandoned; and soon, the same future awaits the post at Orangeburg. Soon, the British army will be confined to Charleston, and they are destined to be driven thence as certainly.”

“Not if they receive new regiments from Europe! Upon this my father counts. It was Lord Rawdon’s assurance that there should be no lack of troops.”

“An idle one. The British exchequer is exhausted. The British nation is prepared to refuse all further subsidies. They can obtain no more troops from Germany. They can no longer pay them if they could get them. Their best hope lay in the strength of the loyalists. The game was to make one half of the people fight the other half; but this hope is failing fast. Their only resource, for new regiments, is Ireland, and the Irish desert their ranks almost as soon as they take the field. Rawdon can no longer yield his confidence to his own regiments. The fate of the war is inevitable. It needs only that we should avoid a general engagement. If we can prolong the struggle for six months, and avoid all serious disaster in the meanwhile, we triumph.”

We must not omit to mention, that Carrie Sinclair was, herself, no moderate rebel. She sided fully with her brother in his principles and hopes. Her feminine nature could not exactly feel his confidence, however; and her father’s prejudices and passions served to prevent her from any unnecessary dis-

play of her sympathies. That her lover wore the patriot colors, was perhaps an additional reason for the faith which she entertained in the cause of liberty. She was a willing listener to her brother. Her soul was an ardent one, and she lent an eager ear to his narratives of the struggle in sundry places. He brought down the progress of the war to the present moment, for her satisfaction; and she soon learned to feel all his confidence. That she was gentle and submissive when with him—and with her father—that she could sympathize with the one, and forbear silently with the other, were only in proof of her filial and sisterly affections. In some degree, she partook of the courage of her race; and she loved, much more than she could excuse to herself, the exciting story of the wild struggle, the gallant charge, the audacious adventure, and the wild attack. So earnestly engaged were the two in these narratives, that the signals of Little Peter, at the chamber-door, were thrice repeated, before they gave ear to his desire to communicate with them. When he was admitted, he said:—

“Benny Bowlegs, Mass Willie—bin sen’ me. He da look out. He say ’trange looking pusson is a-coming! He pull down de rye fiel’ fence; he da come round by de garden. He hab big bone black hoss, and he ’tan [stands] close in de tick, at de bottom ob de garden, as ef he bin da look out for see wha’s a doing yer. Benny say you must keep close. He da watch de pusson and will nebber leff ’em out ob sight.”

“Where’s Benny?”

“He da follow close on de track ob de ’trange pusson, cubbering hese’f in de tick [thicket] for watch ’em.”

“Very good. Keep close, Peter, and don’t let yourself be seen, unless the stranger comes up to the house. Should he want to see my father, admit him, but don’t be out of reach and hearing. The fellow’s coming in on the rear is suspicious! Can it be one of these rascals? Hardly! He would hardly venture thus! What can be the fellow’s policy? If Blodgit has reported me absent, they would certainly seek for me below. If I am supposed to be here, *one* of them, alone, would hardly make the venture. You did not see the fellow, yourself, Peter?”

“Nebber sh’um [see him] maussa. Benny sh’um, and tell

me. He da hide in de t'ick, bottom ob de garden. Benny hide in de t'ick behin' em, for see wha' he guine do. Arter Benny tell me, den he gone for hide."

"Very well! keep about the house, and see what the fellow wants, should he approach. I will be on the alert, and keep as close as possible. All right! Go now!"

Peter disappeared.

"Who can it be?" said Carrie, uneasily.

"As it is but a single man," answered Willie, "there can be no cause for uneasiness. Still, if it be one of these outlaws, they may have some deeper schemes in agitation than I can at present conceive. If I could get a glimpse of the fellow, on his approach, it might give me a clue to his purpose."

And he rose, and looked at the priming of his pistols.

"He is making his way from the rear. I'll tell you what, Carrie, I'll steal through the passage down the private stairs, and conceal myself in the pantry. That will enable me to look out upon the rear, unseen. Do you go first, and see if the coast is clear. It will not do to meet my father now!"

This was done; the moment for descending the stairs was propitious—Colonel Sinclair still brooded in the breakfast room, with little Lottie, playing with her doll, before his eyes—and Willie stole down the private stairway into the pantry, through the sheltering blinds of which he could note all the approaches in the rear of the dwelling, yet remain unseen himself. Here Carrie left him, proceeding to the breakfast-room, whence she would have persuaded little Lottie off to her lessons; but the old man raised his eyes, and mildly said:—

"Leave her for a while, Carrie. It does me good to see her play, and hear her prattle. An hour hence will serve every purpose."

Carrie was very anxious to get Lottie up stairs, and out of the way of danger, but her argument failed with the old man, and she did not venture to declare the apprehensions which she entertained. She rejoined Willie, and he pacified her uneasiness.

"Do not feel troubled, Carrie. I shall not fail you, you know. If there is any danger, Lottie may be sent out of the way at any moment. This fellow, whoever he is, may be ap-

proaching on some such mission as that of Blodgit. At all events, there is but one of them, and I fancy I shall be quite enough to manage him."

"But why let him approach at all, Willie? Why not show yourself armed—all the muskets are here, you know, and father's rifle hangs in the hall—and warn him off at the muzzle of your gun?"

"You forget, Carrie, that my purpose is concealment for the present. Besides, if I show myself at door or window, who knows what rifle-shots I may draw. The dwelling may be reached from the forest-cover by a good rifle; and the fellow, who comes alone, is probably protected in his progress by good marksmen. No! no! It is best and safest to let the one rascal come and empty his budget. We may get something out of him which it will be useful to know. My game is to get intelligence. I have been doing this very business, day and night, for Marion, for the last three weeks, and there is much which I would learn of this neighborhood and Orangeburg, which I could not get from a better source than this promises to be. Don't you become fidgety, now. Come, you are a brave girl, and you must exert yourself to keep quiet. Benny Bowlegs knows his business, and will come to my succor should he be needed. See here, my horn is ready to sound for him; and Little Peter is sufficiently watchful of Benny to play his part manfully. All's safe, believe me; only, as I must hold myself as much from sight as possible, it will not do to let this fellow suspect my presence. We must wait events. Be sure, however, that, so soon as it becomes necessary, I shall make my appearance. To lie quiet now is the best way to get these rascals into my power."

"But what do you want with them? Why not scare them off?"

"Ah! you are not yet a soldier! You can't scare these fellows off! If I did so now, they would be upon you as soon as I disappear. No! no! Better take them, and pare off their claws. They are giving us an opportunity to do so; and only because they take for granted that I am now skulking in yonder forest. Shall I balk them? No! no! Carrie! I hope to bag every rascal of the gang before nightfall!"

This language encouraged the sister ; and she hurried up to her chamber, from the window of which she kept watch upon the approach along the avenue, according to her brother's instructions.

Willie Sinclair never for a moment left his own place of watch. But he was not kept long in expectation. The outlaw made his appearance, emerging from the rear of the garden. Sinclair recognised him in a moment.

"The audacious scoundrel !" he muttered. "It is just the character of the wretch ! I see ! He knows how feeble my father is. Blodgit has told him all ; and he supposes me to be below. He comes with open eyes, in broad daylight, and into the trap. Wolf ! It shall be a dead-fall !"

And, with the utmost coolness, Sinclair disposed his pistols upon the table, cocked and ready ; and drew his sabre so gently as that no sounds should reach his father's senses in the adjoining room. The naked weapon he leaned up in the corner, convenient to the grasp, should he need to dart through the door separating the two apartments. This was ajar—just wide enough to admit of a hand—and could be thrown open, without noise, in a moment. He took off his spurs, and laid them carefully aside. His moccasined feet gave forth no sound. Opening the bosom of his hunting-shirt, he felt for the handle of his *couteau de chasse*, and satisfied himself that it lay easy to his grasp. These things done, he composed himself quietly, to wait the progress of events. He was too old a soldier to endeavor to precipitate them. He resumed his watch at the window-blind, and noted the deliberate progress of the outlaw, as he rode up to a tree, dismounted, flung his bridle over a swinging limb, and marched boldly and heavily up the back stairway into the great passage of the dwelling.

It would have been quite easy for Sinclair to have shot him down at any moment, on this progress ; but Willie did not delight in deliberate bloodshed. He would have felt a degree of shame at such a procedure. Besides, though an outlaw, Dick of Tophet might now design no evil. At all events, there was sufficient time to ascertain his purposes ; and these purposes it was quite important that our major should learn. There was yet another consideration. To act, in any way decisively, in

the business, without suffering the felon hands of the outlaw to be seen, was to involve himself more deeply with his father. Dick was ostensibly a king's man, and Colonel Sinclair would require some very certain evidence before he would believe him capable of designing evil to himself or family. The good old man fancied that every professing loyalist entertained the same reverence for regal authority which filled his own bosom.

All these thoughts passed through Willie Sinclair's mind as the outlaw approached; but he smiled to himself as he said:—

“But he will soon grow wiser! Hell-fire Dick, believing himself secure, will not long delay to show his true colors. I have a long score with the scoundrel. It will go hard with me, but I pay him off to-day!”

CHAPTER XIV.

RANSOM.

NEVER was good old gentleman, in the full enjoyment of the *otium cum dignitate*, less prepared for further disquiet that morning, than our sturdy Baron of Sinclair. The previous events of the day had had the effect of subduing his mood to one of a quiet, if not a pleasant melancholy. The excitement occasioned by the supposed danger of his son had not exactly passed away; but remained in some degree, a cause of thought and meditation. The old man was brooding over past and present, anxious and somewhat weary—not so much vexed as sad—musing upon disappointed expectations, and with those doubts of his own, and the future of his family, which his very confidence in the ultimate success of the king's arms, was calculated to awaken. But his general temper was subdued for a season. He was partly exhausted by his previous excitement, and a brief forbearance, on the part of his gout, had left him in a degree of ease of body, in which his mind could brood without suffering. His features were now mild. His eyes watched the play of little Lottie, and he sometimes answered her little queries, with a childish prattle like her own. Suddenly, the child approached him with a bound, inspiring him with the utmost terrors for his foot. He could not stir a peg, and so sensitive and nervous had he become on the subject of this delicate member, that he waved her off with both hands as he cried aloud:—

“Keep off, Lottie, if you would not hear papa squall out.”

“Would it hurt you so very, very much, papa?”

“Don't you think, Lottie, that it must be a very great hurt, indeed, that would make papa squall out as you sometimes do?”

“As I did t'other night, papa, when the bat flew into the

window, and almost into my face. But that was only from scare, papa. It just brushed my shoulder with its wings."

"Yes, Lottie, and it scares me almost as much when you come bounding about my sore foot like a young kitten."

"But I wouldn't hurt your foot, papa, for anything. Why don't you let me nurse your foot? I'd like to help sister Carrie when she dresses it and binds it up for you in the morning and at night. I can dress it, I'm sure, just as good as sis. Look at my little Sophy now. See how I've dressed her, and she knows how well she looks. Don't you see how big her eyes are, and how proud she is? And this is all my dressing. I dress her a dozen times a day, and know just how to put on everything. And won't you let me dress your poor old foot as well as sis?"

"Ah! you are not yet able for that, Lottie. Some day, perhaps, if papa lives till you have grown a young lady, we shall then see what sort of nurse you will make."

"Thank you, papa! I shall be so glad." And as she drew close to his side, he put his arm about and kissed her. The old soldier was not always stormy."

"There now, Lottie, go to your playthings, my dear; I feel nothing but fear and trembling when you are skipping about me. And yet, Lottie, I would not that you should cease to skip—only skip away—afar off!"

"I won't skip, papa—I won't go near your foot. I wouldn't hurt you for anything."

"Not designedly, Lottie—you would not. But children are careless and thoughtless little creatures, and they frequently do mischief without meaning it. You did not mean to let the parrot out, Lottie; nor to break the big glass shade; nor to upset and break my physic bottle; nor to tumble out of the piazza;—nor to—"

"Oh! papa, don't tell everything. How can you remember everything against me so?"

"I wish *you* to remember, Lottie."

"But I don't wish to remember, papa. I don't like it. It makes me feel so ashamed."

"And this feeling of shame is a good thing sometimes, Lottie; and it is very well, so long as little girls and boys can feel it.

It will be worse for them, if the time should ever come, when they cease to feel it. But, go to your play, my child. I love to see you play."

"I am not playing now, papa; I'm *working*! See what a beautiful dress I've just made for little Sophy. I made it all myself. Sis only cut it out."

"Very pretty! How many of your sister's dresses have you cut up, Lottie, making frocks for little Sophy that never feels the cold?"

"Oh! we don't cut up any except when they're not fit to be worn any more. Sis don't let me. But, papa, do you really like to see me about you, and hear me prattle, as you call it?"

"To hear you prattle, very much; to see you too; but not too near my feet, Lottie;—that's all—remember that!"—seeing the child again approaching him.

"Do you want to hear the song I've just learned, papa? Sis taught me. It's so sweet and pretty—all about

"The little gray squirrel sat in the green tree,
And I looked at him and he looked at me.—
And he said, 'Little girl, do you like as you look?'
That saucy gray squirrel upon the green tree."

"A saucy little squirrel, indeed;—but enough of the song now, Lottie. Some other time you shall sing it all for me. No doubt it is a very pretty song, if Carrie taught you, for she knows how to sing pretty songs, and to make them too."

"She made that one, papa; and she made another that she sings herself, all about

"A handsome cavalier—"

"Ha! ha! so she sings of handsome cavaliers, does she? and you would like to sing of a handsome cavalier too, would you?"

"Yes, if sis would only teach me, but she won't teach me that song. But I mean to watch her, and listen, when she isn't thinking, papa, and I'll learn it all by myself."

"What! stratagem already? And do you remember nothing more about that handsome cavalier?"

"Not much—it is something about 'a handsome cavalier,' and 'a baldric blue,' and how 'He rode at early dawn.'"

"Only, I suppose, 'to brush the morning dew!' Well, it won't do to mangle your sister's verses; so, when you have stolen them from her tongue, then come, Lottie, and hide them away in papa's ear, and we'll enjoy the stolen fruit together."

"Oh! yes, papa! That will be so nice. Won't it make sissi open her eyes when she hears it?"

"And her ears too, if you sing as loudly as you talk, Lottie. But look out my child, and see who it is in the back piazza. I hear a strange voice and footsteps."

"I don't hear anything, papa."

"Go, see, little Lottie, and come tell papa."

The child put down her toys and disappeared in the passage. Her prattle had not prepared the veteran for the sort of visiter he was now required to entertain. Scarcely a moment had elapsed when the child ran back, crying aloud:—

"Oh, papa, a strange man, and so ugly!"

"Not so blasted ugly either, little Ninny!" exclaimed Dick of Tophet, who had followed close behind her, and heard her speech distinctly. He entered the room speaking, dashed his cap down upon the table, and threw himself into a chair directly opposite the cushioned feet of the colonel. The veteran opened his eyes widely at the apparition.

"How are you, old buck, this warm weather?"

Never was mortal astonishment greater than that of our baren at this impudent intrusion and speech. Little Lottie disappeared in terror, flying up stairs. For a moment the colonel was absolutely speechless. The other resumed:—

"I say, how are you, old buck, this hot weather?"

"Who the devil are *you*?" demanded Sinclair, finding his tongue in his increasing indignation.

"The devil himself, if you choose, come to look after his people! How are *you*, I say, in this brimstone weather?"

The colonel stretched out his hand to possess himself of his gold-headed cane, the only weapon near him. His purpose was apparent in his eye. But the ruffian was too quick for him, and too watchful. He had only to thrust out his arm, to send the cane away beyond the old man's reach. It was a heavy weapon of rosewood, and rolled along smoothly over the mahogany, until it made a final plunge from the table to the floor.

The fury of the colonel may be conjectured—not easily described. He made an involuntary effort to rise; but Dick of Tophet had a formidable ally in that great toe; and a sudden terrible twinge in the member, at once taught the veteran his utter helplessness. He roared out:—

“Halloo, there! Benny! Little Peter!”

“You waste the wind, old fellow, that would cool your hominy. The niggers are all off, you remember, looking for your son’s body.”

“My son’s body? My son!—”

“Yes! He that was murdered last night by Pete Blodgit and Hell-fire Dick, you know. Ha! ha! ha! And you believed that story, old boy? Well, if it will be any consolation to you to know, then I’ll tell you, that your son’s safe for the present. He’s in powerful good hands. We’ve caught him, the young rebel, and he’s in a close hitch, under a good-sized hickory, not half a mile off. He is still alive, and kicking; but whether he’ll live another hour, all depends on you! I’ve come to see how much ransom you’re ready to pay down—guineas—on the hub! How much would you valley his neck at?”

The father’s agonies came back.

“Do you tell me that my son is a prisoner?”

“Fast in a fix—tight as a blacksmith’s vice!”

“To whom is he a prisoner?”

“Why, to me and my brother sodgers, to be sure!”

“And who are you?”

“Who am I? That’s a pretty question. I thought the very looks of me was enough to let common people know who I am. But you don’t count yourself among common people, I remember. You’re a great harrystocrat, and can’t see and feel as common people do! Well, I’ll teach you who I am; and ef you won’t l’arn it by common word of mouth, I’ve many other ways of giving you onderstanding before I’m done with you. Look at me good, old fellow, and you sees Joel Andrews—that’s my nateral name, you see, that I got from my dad and the parson; but ef you really wants to know me, as the common people knows me, then I’m ‘Hell-fire Dick,’ at your sarvice!”

The outlaw seemed to entertain a certain pride in his fearful *nom de guerre*, and his head was uplifted, and his arm stretched out, with a sort of theatrical dignity, as he concluded.

"And are *you* that bloody villain?"

"Come! come! no bloody compliments, you old heathen harrystocrat! Keep a civil tongue in your head! You're speaking to one of his majesty's officers, let me tell you; and, more than that, as I tell'd you before, your rebel son's neck is at the end of my stirrup-leather. So, be as decent as you kin be, ef you have a mind to his salvation."

"You in his majesty's service?"

"To be sure—why not? Don't you think I kin cut and slash as well as Tarleton? and ef you ever seed Huck, you'll say I'm jest as good-looking a person."

"In his majesty's commission!—never!"

"Why, you bloody old rebel! do you doubt my word?"

"Rebel! Oh! scoundrel, if I could get at you!" And the veteran writhed in his chair, from the double pangs of gout and indignation.

"'Twouldn't help you much, old fellow, ef you could. I could lay you out with a single wipe. So you needn't git into a passion, and I don't mean to let you put me in one. I'm as cool as blazes. You see I've got your rebel son in a hitch—him and you both, pretty much in the same sort of fix—he to a hickory, and you to a harm-chair—got you both jest where I wants you;—and so I kin afford to let your tongue wag a bit. When you're tired, you kin listen. But don't go too fur and talk too long; for I hain't got much time to be wasting upon you, and I ain't the most easy-tempered person in a marching regiment. I jest wants you to see your true sitivation, and Willie Sinclair's sitivation; and then we'll talk about the tarms. For short then, you're to onderstand, that; ef you wants to get him out of the rope, you've got one thing to do—pay up—shell out—ontwist—empty!"

And the outlaw accompanied his speech with suitable action, showing the process of disbursing from purse and pocket.

The fierce old colonel, "angry to kill," was yet enough of the old soldier to discover that he was truly "in a hitch," as the ruffian described his own and son's "sitivation." He was held

at fearful vantage by his visiter. He had no weapon—the faithful staff was taken from his hands—and he was a prisoner in his chair! His gouty foot kept him in continual anxiety; for the action of the outlaw brought him, at times, into fearful propinquity with the diseased member. What was to be done? Proud as was his stomach, and fierce his courage, his only hope lay in temporizing with the ruffian, until he could procure succor. Yet, if it were true that his two faithful negroes were absent from the plantation, in a fruitless search after a son who was a prisoner at hand, and threatened with the halter—where was his hope? The cold sweat broke out in thick drops over the old man's face. He was in that condition, which Benny described as one in which he frequently found him—ready to boil over. But, though ready to boil over, he did not dare to suffer that operation now; and to keep down the steam of his passion, at high pressure, required all his strength of soul and body upon the valve. It was amusing, under the circumstances, to witness his labored efforts to look and speak with becoming moderation, if not mildness.

“Hem! and so—you say, sir—that—a—you are a king's man—an officer in his majesty's service?”

“Ah! your tune changes, does it? You kin be civil of your tongue when it pleases you! That's always the way with you overbearing harrystocrats. When you've got the whip-hand of a body, you're all thunder; but when you're flat on your backs, you kin lick the hand of a poor man—ay, and wash his feet for him!”

Oh! how the proud man writhed in his torture of mind and body! The other proceeded—

“But what's it to you, ef I'm king's or liberty man! I'm king myself, hyar, jest now; and I hev' *your* neck, and your son's neck both, ef I please, in a short halter, under a spreading limb. And who's to say 'stop,' ef I say 'swing.' Kain't you understand yit? That's your sitivation. And now, for your son's ransom. What do you say to that? Fork up steady!”

The old man recovered his dignity, though he spoke with bitterness. There was a degree of humiliation, to which neither his own, nor his son's danger, could bend his soul.

"Verily, what matters it what you are, when I am thus! I am at any man's mercy! I can neither fight nor fly!"

"That's the hitch! Didn't I say that you were in a fix, tight as any blacksmith's vice?"

"You call yourself a British officer? It may be so—though it will be very long before I shall persuade myself that his majesty trusts his commission to such a person as yourself!"

"Take care, old fellow! Every imperdent speech of yourn, adds so much to the ransom. Mind what you're saying?"

The colonel simply waved his hand impatiently, and continued:—

"If you are a British officer, and my son is your prisoner, you have no power upon his life. Take him to the nearest post, and lodge him in prison. There ends your duty. You have no right either to hang or ransom."

"Don't tell me of rights, old Billzebug! 'My right is hyar, and hyar!'—touching the pistols and knife at his girdle—"and these rights, hyar, old fiddlestick, kin take your ears off, and slit your pipe for you, as easy as talking! *You're* my prisoner, too, I'll let you know, you d—d old rebel, and I'll hev' a ransom out of you for all the family, gal-children and all, jest the same as for your son, before I let a hair of one of 'em out of my hands!"

The steam became terribly eager for escape; the valves could not endure the strain; they yielded.

"Rebel!" roared the colonel, his loyalty irritated beyond measure. "Rebel! villain!"

"To be sure, and a d—d imperdent one at that! Look you, old Sinkler, I knows you well, and all your kidney. You're one of them bloody, proud, heathen harrystocrats, that look upon a poor man, without edication, as no better than a sort of two-legged dog, that you kin lay the lash on whenever you see him lying in the doorway. And your son is jest another sich a tyrant heathen! And you've had a long swing between you, living on the fat of the land, and riding roughshod over poor men's backs. But thar's a great change, thanks to the king's marcies! and the good time for the poor man's come at last!—and, now, we've got a-top of the wheel! We've got the chaine at the good things of this life; and we kin pay off

old scores, wagon-whip and hickory, agin your nice gould-headed cane! And I'll make you feel both afore I'm done with you! I'll hev' you, and all your family, on your marrow-bones before me, or the rope shall stretch with the weight of some of you; and them we don't hang to the swinging limb, we may stretch in some other way! So look you, by the old Satan, and Billzebug, and all other devils, the blackest that ever come out of the infarnal pit, I swear that you shall buckle down to me to-day! Pay up—let's have your gould and silver, and plate—call down them gal-children—I want to look at 'em close;—call 'em, I say, and jest you prepare to give up all I axes, or it's a short cord for you, and no time for grace."

The boiler burst!

The strain upon it could be borne no longer! With a desperate effort, the veteran, defying pain, strove to rise. All now was iron in his face and soul. The energy and courage of fifty years reanimated him. His eyes, unblinking, were fastened upon those of the insolent ruffian, with the deadly intensity of the rattlesnake. Could looks slay, that one glance would have been fatal to the wretch. The gout was forgotten! He rose to his feet, and appeared about to throw himself upon the outlaw, when his limbs failed; and, though his agony forced not a groan from his bosom, he caught upon the leaf of the table, and sank back into his chair.

For a moment speechless from pain, he hushed every other acknowledgment of his sufferings, and recovering himself as rapidly as possible, with eyes as stern, and voice as firm, as if he were superior to any torture, he exclaimed—

"Dog! wretch! reptile! I spit upon and defy you!"

And he seconded the speech with the appropriate action. It was all of which he was capable. Of course, he looked for the death-stroke in another moment. But his brave soul was unblenching, and his eye sternly braved that of the executioner, with all the nothing scorn which belonged to the indignity to which he had subjected him.

With mixed howl and scream, like that of some wild beast goaded with spear and fire, the ruffian started to his feet, drew his knife, and was about to spring upon his victim! But, even as he leaped, he fell!

There was a slight rush from without—a rustle rather—a movement so light and rapid as to seem a flash—then a blow was heard, dull and heavy—and a fall! The outlaw reeled incontinently backward, sunk hopelessly against the table, bore it down with him in a general crash, and lay prostrate—the blood gushing from mouth and ears—stunned and silent upon the floor!

CHAPTER XV.

THE FAMILY GROUP AT THE BARONY.

THE whole affair was over in a moment. It had passed so rapidly that the colonel had not recovered himself quite—not enough for comment—when he beheld the stranger, to whose timely blow he owed his life, stoop down to the stunned and bleeding ruffian, and proceed to strip him of knife and pistols.

“Who is it,” he cried, “to whom I owe this help? Ha! ha! my good fellow, whoever you are, you have taken lessons in a first-rate British school! That buffet was delivered with proper science; well aimed to rake the ear upward! The arm duly shortened for delivery, the whole body working upon a pivot; and the whole weight thrown into right arm and shoulder! I have tried—I have taught—that blow, a thousand times myself! Where did you learn it, my brave fellow? Who are you?”

“What! don’t you know me, father?”

“Ha! Willie! Willie, my son! Is it you? God be praised—you are safe!”

Then, with entirely changed voice:—

“But how the devil should I know you in that villanous dress? Is that a costume fit for a gentleman, or a gentleman’s son? Is that the uniform which your rebel authorities provide? At least, they have some idea of propriety. The dress suits the rabble.”

“I’ll answer you directly, sir,” said Willie Sinclair, “as soon as this rogue is properly roped.”

By this time both Carrie and Lottie had rushed down stairs. They stood with their arms about the neck of the veteran. But Willie Sinclair, speaking in the voice of authority, sent them off.

"Back, Carrie; take Lottie with you! Back to your perch, and keep a sharp lookout! We may have the rest of the outlaws upon us before we know where we are. Back! Lose not a moment; I will sound for Benny and Peter!

Thus speaking, Willie Sinclair winded his horn merrily, while stooping over the prostrate ruffian whom he had entirely disarmed. He did not forego his vigilance a moment. The fellow was still insensible. At least, he made no motion, lying upon his side, with the blood still trickling from his ear. In truth, it was a formidable blow—scarcely to be conceived by those who are ignorant of the degree of power, which one versed in "the science" can throw into a muscular right arm. But the rogue might be "playing possum" nevertheless. Such fellows are tough, and capable of enduring many such buffets.

"Have you killed him?" asked the old man.

"No! His fate saves him from that! The gallows is not to be defrauded of its prey! He is only stunned."

"A good blow, Willie—well delivered! I taught you the stroke myself. I remember all our practice."

"Yes, indeed! and I thank you for the lesson, sir. It has served a good purpose!"

"Ay, sir; and it is such as you, thus daily receiving proofs of their admirable excellence, who would be for abandoning all our best British institutions!"

The young man laughed merrily at the solemn imputation, as he answered:—

"It seems not, sir. You see that I keep some of them in full practice."

At this moment Benny and Little Peter both appeared.

"A plough-line, Benny!" cried the major.

"You kill de blackguard, Mass Willie?"

"No! He is recovering! A plough-line!"

Benny was already prepared, and, with Peter's assistance, the outlaw was roped tightly, hands and feet, and turned upon his back, quiet as a turtle in like predicament.

"The bloody scoundrel!"—quoth the old man. "He had *me* in a hitch, as he phrased it! But his present one seems rather of the tightest fashion!"

"He no guine get out ob *dis* hitch, mass kurnel, wha' I put

em in, by he own teet' and fingers!" said Benny, with great complacency, putting his foot irreverently into the sides of the outlaw.

Dick of Tophet now opened his eyes, which were very glassy, and one of them bloodshot. They did not exhibit much intelligence, but took in the surrounding aspects slowly, and with a stupid sort of stare. Gradually, he seemed to be recovering his senses. He endeavored to draw up his legs and stretch out his arms; and thus acquired a full knowledge of his bonds. His constraints brought back his consciousness. He felt his "situation" evidently; but he was too old a ruffian—of a nature quite too hard—to *show* any fear or feeling. He stared steadily into the faces about him, with a sort of scowling unconcern.

"Take him off to the lower story, boys," said Willie, "and give him a taste of rum or brandy. Soak a cloth with the liquor, and put a bandage about his head. Then be off, on your watch again!"

The negroes swung the outlaw up, by arms and feet, and he was carried down into the brick basement of the dwelling. His head was bandaged, and he eagerly swallowed the liquor that was poured down his throat. Willie Sinclair, having seen him safely shut up, returned to the dining-room. Carrie and Lottie were also now permitted to come down to the *réunion* of the family, as soon as the two negroes had resumed their places of watch. Was that reunion now to be a grateful one? We shall see.

Once more the baron sate with all his children around him. He had resumed his composure. His cushions were restored; his game leg was again put at ease—and the two girls safe beside him. Willie Sinclair took a seat as composedly as the outlaw had done, occupying nearly the same situation, directly in front of his father; and the two surveyed each other for a while, without speaking. At length the old man broke silence:—

"So, sir—you think you have done great things by your performances to-day!"

"Not great, sir. If I think about the matter at all, with any gratification, it is only because I have been able to be of some

little service, sir, where I owe much duty, and feel the most unbounded love."

"*Little* service, sir! You saved my life!"

"Very likely, sir. I think so!"

"You came in the nick of time, Willie Sinclair:—in the very nick of time;—but why were you absent at any time? That is the question, sir?"

"It is one, sir, that we need not reargue."

"Well, sir, as you please," said the other stiffly. "To shrink from arguing one's own cause is, perhaps, the best evidence of its worthlessness!—and I am willing to admit, sir, that you delivered an admirable buffet;—not only well-timed, but well delivered! But *who* taught you *that* buffet, sir? Who was it that had you carefully lessoned by the best boxer in old England? Shame on you, sir; shame on you—to fly in the face of your teacher, and strike at the very bosom from which you drew your nurture!"

"My dear father—let us talk of something more pleasant to both parties. It is not often that we meet, and you know that we shall never agree upon this subject. Let us think of more grateful topics. And, to begin, pray, let me ask—have you none of that old Madeira left, sir—Hopson's brand—that famous pale old Madeira? I confess my mouth waters for a smack of that gentle creature. She was always a favorite of mine, and after the rough work of the last half hour, I feel as if she would be particularly grateful to my palate!"

"What! do the tastes of a gentleman still survive in the bosom of a rascalion rebel? They should be encouraged. Get us a bottle, Carrie, my dear, out of the garret. You know the brand. Don't shake. Decant it carefully. The fellow deserves a drink—the best reward, perhaps, of a prize-fighter."

And the veteran laughed—with a merry twinkle in his great blue eye—arched as it was with bushy brows—and a pleasant twist of his still rosy lips. Who could fancy beneath that countenance a hard and relentless nature? Who could fail to see, in that genial smile, that his son was the apple of his eye? Nature was declaring herself at this moment, at every hazard. The old man was by no means so tough as at forty-five. The excitements of the day—his gout—all had unsettled him; and

his mind, in its workings—a combative and pugnacious mind—was in temporary suspension. The blood, the heart, were comparatively at liberty to argue as they pleased, and they took advantage of the opportunity.

But not for long! Willie Sinclair had outraged all the old man's notions of propriety—his faith, his loyalty—the prescriptive pride of numerous generations—his own individual sentiments and feelings, which a social aristocracy had long nourished into absolute laws. Besides, our veteran was of pure Saxon—sanguine temperament. He was off in a flash! never long at one point, constantly veering with every impulse, and no more to be *fixed* than the well-oiled vane upon the house-top. Don't suppose, by this, that we mean to describe him as capricious of principle—only of emotion. Never was man more honorable, or more steadfast to the polar star of truth and justice, than the elder Willie Sinclair. We have seen, that, with death staring him in the face, without help or remedy, he yet scorned to make a single concession, for safety, to the brutal and exacting insolence of the outlaw whose knife threatened his throat. Death, by any process, was preferable to this! Though our colonel was obedient to his impulses, yet these impulses were all tuned and regulated by his habitual recognition of moral and social law. All his *instincts*—and there are moral as well as animal instincts—pity that we study them so little, or so seldom allow for them—were those of justice, faith, loyalty! He was a good sample of the best English squirearchy, when the squirearchy of England was legitimate—in the days of Falkland and Hampden—frank, hearty, honest—stubborn, it may be, for stubbornness is somewhat necessary to virtue itself—but no *simulacrum*—no mere sham, the miserable mockery, not the semblance, of what was an honored and a living thing.

The wine was brought, bright, clear, amber-like, and smiling through the crystal glass like evening sunshine in the eyes of beauty.

“Shall I fill for you, sir?” quoth the major, taking up the decanter.

“It is scarce possible to deny myself,” answered the veteran, “yet”—with a grunt—“I shall pay the penalty if I drink

This confounded gout. It destroys all the finer tastes of the gentleman."

"His privileges rather," answered the son. "But one glass will hardly trouble you, and I doubt if this bright liquor is a bit more unfriendly to the gout than your tea and coffee."

"What do you know about the matter, sir?—but fill—fill! I will venture upon a single glass only, and shall hope for immunity in sinning, as, from necessity, I forbear the full extent of my desires. There was a time, Willie, when I could no more have paused, the taste once taken, till the bottle was empty, than I could have flown. Sir—the king's health! Will you drink that?"

"Ay, sir, why not! You do not object to my additional wish that he may soon attain his proper senses and temper, as well as his health."

"D—n your amendment, sir, and drink as you please! There will never be an increase of sense in your case, I fear."

"Well, sir, that should trouble neither of us, so long as what I have suffices for the preservation of my tastes. You see, I have by no means lost my relish for this goodly spirit," and he refilled his glass as he spoke.

"What do they give you to drink in camp?"

"Oh! I shall puzzle you! We have a beverage in camp, sir—that is when we have any, that is probably very much like the nectar of the ancients—born of the sun and of the dew;—of night and noonday in equal proportions;—which at once fires and subdues;—wings you to the stars, yet puts you comfortably to sleep on a bed of earth that does not need to be spread with moss."

"You are not speaking of Jamaica?"

"No, sir: I rather prefer the Jamaica when I can get it, to this potent liquor. The Jamaica is not without other qualities which I somewhat affect. But our opportunities of judging of the one are too infrequent to prevent us from a very warm appreciation of the other——"

"It is Hollands!"

"No! It's birthplace is much more picturesque. There is a beautiful river, sir, of our sister state, Virginia——"

"Colony, sir——"

"As you please—state or colony—the political position of the region has no sort of effect upon the qualities of this goodly beverage, which derives its popular name from a beautiful river of Virginia, which rises among the Laurel mountains—famous birthplace—runs north for three hundred miles, and loses itself at last in the Ohio, which it infuses with new virtues. Its waters are not waters, but virtues, or they fable greatly who tell us that this beverage either oozes from its banks, or is borne onward undiluted by its currents. It is scooped up——"

"What nonsense! What is the name of this river?"

With profound gravity the other replied to the question:—

"Monongahela!"

"Pshaw! and you have been prating all the time of whiskey!—the most infernal of all drinks that burn up human vitals! No wonder you smack your lips with new life at the taste of Madeira."

"You are right, sir. Monongahela, though quite popular in camp, is by no means a favorite of mine. In spite of its divine origin and pretty name, I prefer Madeira. Sir, I do myself the honor to drink the health of my father in a bumper."

And the action seconded the word.

"Faith, Willie, at this rate, you will need no help of mine in finishing the bottle. But you are welcome. It will help to show you what you forfeit by your insane politics. By the way, talking of your camp—have you any camp left anywhere?—any foothold, swamp or highland, in which you keep your ground? If I err not, Lord Rawdon, at last advices, had driven your Yankee general wholly out of sight. And these garments in which you now appear! Tell me, my son, are you not a fugitive?"

This was said with great concern. Meanwhile, our major of dragoons had taken little Lottie into his arms, and she was perched upon his knee, with her head nestling lovingly on his shoulder.

"A fugitive!"

"Ay, sir, a fugitive—flying from danger—pursued by superior forces—your own forces utterly dispersed—a rebel in danger of the rope—a fugitive from justice!"

The major put down the child, and rubbed his hands merrily.

"Well, sir, you will give me shelter?"

"I know not that I do not make myself criminal in doing so; but I trust, sir, that I am not without influence in his majesty's army—my known loyalty—my past services—will enable me, I trust, to secure your safety—your pardon. But only on condition, Willie, that you are truly repentant—that you renounce your rascally associates——"

"It does not need, my dear father. I trust that I shall never seek to purchase mere safety by the sacrifice of honor; trust still more earnestly that my father will never descend to the necessity of proposing or encouraging such sacrifice."

The father absolutely groaned, whether from gout or reflection it is not needful that we inquire. The major of dragoons continued:—

"No, sir; I am in no sort of danger. The only representatives of his Britannic majesty in these precincts at present are of a class that is much more apt to endanger you than me. You have had a taste of the quality to-day."

"What, sir, you do not pretend to say that this atrocious outlaw serves under the standard of my sovereign?"

"You heard his own boast to that effect."

"But he lied, sir—lied in his throat. He is a scoundrel, an outlaw, a miserable marauder and plunderer."

"Very true; but it is not the less true that he has been, and is still, I believe, in the service of the British general. He is absolutely a sort of officer, and was, to my knowledge, at one time, a sergeant of that efficient corps of rangers to which his lordship of Rawdon and Moira gave the title of Congaree foragers."

"Lord Rawdon employ such rascals—never!"

"Nay, his lordship is not in a situation to scruple at any qualities in his levies. He is only too well pleased to fill the gaps in his regiments with any sort of cattle. His lordship thinks with Falstaff, that, if good for nothing else, they are at least excellent food for powder."

"Do you mean to say, sir, that there is a lack of troops in the British army?"

"A most alarming one."

"Since when? He has a force, I am sure, quite adequate to all his purposes."

"Yes—if they be retreat, flight, and the loss of the country—adequate to nothing else, sir."

"What! and when he has just driven your Yankee blacksmith general out of sight—out of the colony!"

"You get intelligence slowly here, my dear father, or it is manufactured at the wrong mint. Are you not aware that Lord Rawdon has abandoned Ninety-Six, almost as soon as he relieved it?"

"The devil he has! I don't—I won't believe a word of it."

"Very well! You will see in sufficient season for yourself. Why, sir, he is even now in full retreat; and now, Colonel Cruger is only lingering at Ninety-Six to collect the loyalists and all their families, and bring them off from a region which has grown quite too hot to hold them. We are soon about to witness the melancholy spectacle of the exodus from their homes of an entire colony, men, women, and children, numbering thousands, who, committed to the fortunes of the British army, are destined to share and anticipate their fate."

"Pooh! pooh! all this is simply ridiculous."

"Why, sir, have you not seen the fall, one by one, of every British post in the interior. Rawdon abandons and burns Camden—Forts Watson, Motte—the posts at Granby, Augusta, and Silver Bluff, all succumb;—by a prodigious effort, employing almost all his force, leaving Charleston to a guard rather than a garrison, he relieves Ninety-Six, and that he is obliged to abandon also. In a few days he will reach the Congarees in full retreat; and you may look to see him making a post of rest, before long, of Orangeburg, or possibly, the Sinclair Barony, on his flight to the seaboard."

"Spite of all disaster, sir, Lord Rawdon shall be welcome to Sinclair Barony, and if need be, to avert the event which you threaten, its master and all his slaves shall arm for the crown. It is not in a moment of peril that I will abandon that standard under which I have grown to manhood."

"I should be the last person in the world, my father, to wish to see you do so. God forbid that in any exigency a man should abandon his principles. You see things with other eyes

than mine, and you see them honestly, though, as I think, through a false medium. But you are to adhere to what you recognise as true. You, sir, must also feel that I am required by the laws of conscience to obey a similar necessity. It is a melancholy necessity, my dear father, which divides us in this war, but it is not the less a necessity with both—one which duly results from the very exercise of the best virtues. Believe me, sir, you can not have endured more mortification than I have pain, in the choice which renders me heedless of your sympathies and desires."

"Ah! Willie, Willie!" murmured the veteran tenderly—"it is a cruel, cruel dispensation. Why my son could you not feel with me, think with me, follow the course which I have taken, sustain the banner which I have borne."

"It could not be, sir! What was right with you, and in your day, would be wrong in mine."

"How is that possible, sir? What is right yesterday, is right to-morrow—right for a thousand years—right for eternity."

"Yes, sir, in simple morals that would be quite true, but not in respect to the policy of nations. With these, right changes aspect according to political necessities, and the altered conditions of states. There is one truth, sir, which always eludes the class to which you belong."

"What is that, sir?"

"That the American colonies have passed through their minority. A people who are able to maintain themselves against foreign pressure, have survived the necessity of foreign rule. The mental and social developments which enable them to defend themselves by arms, are in proof of resources which revolt at foreign dominion. If the American mind is equal to its own necessities, it is adequate to its own rule. If we no longer need English armies for our protection, we no longer need English mind for our government."

"But this, sir, is the argument of ingratitude. You forget the past, sir—the immense debt, arms, men, money, all means and appliances, for strength and safety, which we owe to the mother-country."

"No, sir, it is Britain that forgets. We have forgotten noth-

ing. Britain had a right to expect our gratitude, but not the sacrifice of our liberties. That you should lend me money—nay, give it—protect me in weakness—help and cherish me in sickness—gives you no right to enslave me for ever for these services.”

“Don’t talk of slavery, sir, taxation is not slavery.”

“The denial of our right, sir, is the worst slavery, and this was the error and offence of Britain. It proved her to be neither just nor wise. But do not let us glide into the renewal of old discussions. They can not serve us now. They can not change your habit, nor unsettle my principles. Let us talk of other things—of home, sir, of yourself, of the girls—of any subject but this which divides us.”

The veteran sighed deeply.

“Willie Sinclair, my son, I sometimes feel that I could curse you, so bitterly do I suffer from the choice you have made against my sovereign.”

“Do not that, my dear father—do not that!” answered the major tenderly, as he took the old man’s hand, and carried it to his lips. The eyes of both were filled with tears. Carrie Sinclair stole round and passed her arm about the veteran’s neck; little Lottie encircled that of her brother, intuitively, in the same manner. The father audibly sobbed as he replied:—

“But that I know you to be honest, Willie, I *could* have cursed you, and driven you for ever from my sight. But you have always been truthful, and spoken the truth; and I honor you, sir—honor you, though your course has sometimes maddened me;—and I rejoice in your valor and good name, Willie Sinclair, as a gentleman and a soldier, though your sword is raised for the defeat and dishonor of my sovereign.”

After this there was silence for a space. When the dialogue was resumed, the subject was changed. For the present there were no more reproaches.

CHAPTER XVI.

DICK OF TOPHET'S LATER MOVEMENT.

"By the way, sir," said the major to his father, as the party sat at lunch, "you have been honored with a visit from Lord Rawdon and his suite."

"Yes, sir, I was so honored. His lordship took the Barony in his route upward, and passed the night with us, as did several of his suite. His army was cantoned in the old indigo-field."

"I was aware of it. Once or twice during the night, I was within a short half-mile of the house, and I made the circuit of his whole encampment."

"Indeed, sir, you were bold. The sight was hardly satisfactory. You saw some splendid troops, sir, fresh from Ireland; two thousand brave fellows at least, and some of the finest looking chaps I ever saw. And, by the way, sir, your sister Carrie there made a conquest of one of the young Irishmen."

"Ah, indeed! who?" and the major looked archly at his sister's face. "But why should I ask. I know already."

"How's that, sir?" and both the veteran and Carrie looked curious.

"We are well supplied with birds of the wood and air that bring us tidings in a moment from all quarters. The attentions of my Lord Edward Fitzgerald, to her sly ladyship, did not fail to be fully reported in camp."

"Why, Willie! he paid me no attention."

"Fie, Carrie, my child, you know he did. Ask Lottie, Willie; she can tell you all. The child was quite curious, I assure you; and was particularly mortified at being put to bed an hour or two before the usual time."

"Nay, father, not a minute."

"She certainly felt it a great hardship to be packed off and put away when she was."

"Yes, indeed, papa. And so many handsome officers."

"Tell Willie about the young lord, Lottie."

Carrie looked a little uneasy, and lifted her finger at the child, who smiled with a pretty little malice at her elder sister, and prattled out a mischievous reply

"Oh! Lord Edward did talk a great deal with you, Carrie; you know he did; and he did watch you with all his eyes; and he sat with you a long time upon the sofa; and when papa was talking with the other lord, he got you to play for him upon the harpsichord; and Carrie sang for him, brother Willie, and he did seem so pleased to hear her sing; and it was a song about Ireland too; about 'the green isle of the ocean,' you know."

"A pretty case of *michin-malico*, and clearly all true, Carrie."

Carrie was no simple country-girl. She had seen a good deal of society, and exhibited no rustic emotions. Still, there was a heightened color upon her cheeks, as she laughingly answered—

"Every syllable, Willie; and that she remembers so well, and reports so truly, is only in proof that she was put to bed not a moment too soon. I shall have to indulge in more caution hereafter."

"You see, Willie, she is obliged to confess everything!" said the old man.

"Is it a full confession? I fancy from the color on her cheeks that something has been kept back. At all events, what is revealed is enough to make a lover jealous, and I must look up one of my friends and put him on the trail, Carrie."

The girl looked at her brother with an anxious warning in her eye, and continued to lift a finger to him, as she had done to Lottie. It was evidently a dangerous progress that the dialogue was taking toward a *tabooed* precinct, and the veteran turned suspiciously, and with a very decided change in his voice, said:—

"What is that, sir?—of whom are you speaking?"

"Nay, I am speaking of no one especially; but there is

enough in this story of Lord Edward to make another lover jealous."

"But there is no other, sir—none!"

"I am then really to understand, sir, that Lord Edward Fitzgerald is Carrie's lover?" answered the brother evasively.

"I said not that, sir—no, sir, I do not mean that. The young lord was certainly very attentive, and I was sorry to think that Carrie was not so well pleased with his attentions as she might have been. She played and sang for him, it is true, and behaved as graciously as any lady could do in her own house, sir."

"What more would you have, sir, unless you really desired her union with this young Irishman?"

"And I should not be displeased, sir, if such a thing could take place," retorted the veteran, quickly and rather sharply, as if somewhat dissatisfied with the tone of voice in which the major had spoken. He continued:—

"Lord Edward Fitzgerald, sir, is a young nobleman of the most noble character, and the most illustrious connections. My Lord Rawdon, who is charmed with his courage and conduct, gave me all his history. There is no stock in the Irish peerage superior. The Geraldines have always been famous for their blood. Lord Edward's father was the duke of Leinster; his mother the daughter of Charles, duke of Richmond; he himself, sir, is worthy of his race and immediate parents."

"You seem to have pursued the subject of Irish genealogy of late, sir, with more sympathy and respect than formerly. There was a time when Irish nobility, and the whole Irish race, found but little sympathy in your thoughts."

The veteran did not seem to relish the reminiscence.

"And for a good reason, sir—they were a rebellious people always."

"The ancestors of this young man especially so."

"The fault was in his ancestors—not in him, sir. He is making the proper atonement. But I can not expect that his present loyalty will find favor in your eyes, as it does in mine!"

"No, indeed, sir! How should it?" exclaimed the major of dragoons, rising from his chair and striding heavily across the apartment—"How should it, when it betrays all the examples

of his past, and all the securities of his country's future. How should he be here, sir, with his own people in bonds at home, fighting the battles of their oppressor! What a spectacle is it to see the nobles of a race, who perpetually complain of their own tyrants, seeking with naked swords to subject a foreign people to the sway of the same tyrannies. One who calls himself an Irish patriot fighting against the liberties of America."

"Liberties! Fiddlesticks!"

The young man did not notice the interruption as he continued:—

"It is thus that Ireland is made to drink the bitter cup of her own bondage—bitterness to the lips, death to the life, dishonor to the soul. Her people serve as willing mercenaries of the very sovereign whom they hate, and every blow which they strike in his behalf, rivets more firmly the chain about their own wrists."

"Pshaw! This is all boy-declamation, Willie. Ireland wears no chains which it is not necessary and proper that she should wear."

The other quickly replied:—

"On that point, sir, we are agreed. And so long as her people are eager to fight the battles of their own tyrants, may the chains grow and eat into the flesh, and sink into the soul, and root out from existence every atom of life in the nature which so foolishly and foully degrades itself."

"Take care, sir—take care, Willie Sinclair! Do not make me angry, sir—I am not easily made angry, sir—I am quite quiet, quite gentle, my son—but don't it, sir, beware how you provoke me!"

"I have no wish to provoke or anger you, sir, and we will dismiss the subject, if you please. I have no fear that Carrie Sinclair will feel more sympathy for this young Irish lord than I do. I trust that she will find a proper mate among her own people."

"Well, sir, but if she should—if, in obedience to my wishes, sir—"

"I have no fear, sir, that your wishes, in such an affair as this, will ever put on the aspect of a law, sir."

"And why not, sir—why not?"

"Because, sir, I know that you can never become a tyrant to your own children."

"I know not that, sir, when they become disobedient, rebellious, Willie Sinclair. And this reminds me to ask, sir, since when did you become an intimate of a certain Captain Travis, of Edisto?"

"Now comes my turn!" was the unuttered thought of the major of dragoons, looking with a faint smile to the anxious face of Carrie.

"I am no intimate of Captain Travis, sir."

"Ah! I am very glad to hear it, sir. He is not the person, sir, whom I should wish to see intimate with a son of mine. He is a dirty fellow, sir—not a gentleman—a corrupt, selfish, mercenary rascal. I knew him well in the Cherokee war. He is not the person for a gentleman's intercourse. But you have intercourse with him, sir—pray what is the nature of that intercourse?"

"It belongs wholly to my official duties. It is, accordingly, sir, of a nature not to be communicated."

"How, Willie Sinclair—how can that be? This man is in the service, I am sorry to say it, of his Britannic majesty. He is in the commissariat, I believe. I sold him a hundred head of cattle on British account."

"You are right, sir; he is in the commissariat."

"Of what nature, then, is your intercourse with him if it be official. Either he is a traitor to his king, sir—"

"Do you not see, my dear father, from your own conclusions, that the intercourse with him is such as it would not be proper for me to tell, or you to hear?"

The old man paused a moment, then resumed:—

"And, on your honor, sir, you have none but an official intercourse with him."

"None, sir."

"How, then, is it that this person has the audacity to come to me, and impudently to suggest a union between his family and mine?"

"He must answer this question for himself. I can only say that his proposition was wholly unauthorized by me."

"I am glad to hear you say thus much, Willie—very glad.

But have you told me all, sir? Is there no secret in reserve? I tell you, Willie Sinclair, that this man Travis did more than hint to me that you had a passion for his daughter."

"He told you but the truth, sir—though unauthorized to do so."

"And why unauthorized? Who has a better right than a father to be made aware of the disposition of a son?"

"And in proper season, sir, all the secrets of Willie Sinclair shall be put into his father's keeping. Let this suffice for the present. If my confidences are in anything withheld from you, sir, or any of my family, it is only where they affect others. When they relate to myself only, you shall know them all. When I am permitted to speak for others, you shall hear."

"This will not answer, sir. Who is this young woman, sir—the daughter of this miserable commissary?"

"Let me pray you, my dear father, to say nothing of *her*, and, for the present, if you please, no more of him. In due time, you shall know all that I can tell. Enough now that, in a season while the storm rages without, we are a family of love within. Will you not spare to our meeting, destined to be cut short in a few hours"—and the major took out his watch, and mused over the face of it for a moment—"let us, my dear father, enjoy the two or three hours that are left to our reünion, without another word calculated to impair its serenity."

The old man put his hand to his brow. There was some sullenness upon his face as he replied:—

"Be it so, Willie Sinclair. The rights of my sovereign do not forbid that I should tolerate the presence for a few hours of my son—and I trust that his own training has been such as will keep him from a degrading alliance. One thing let me say, and bear it in mind, if you please, never, while my head is hot, will I tolerate the presence of that man, Travis, in my house, as one who has a right to be there. Never! never."

And the fist of the veteran thundered upon the table, as if to register the oath. The young man's face saddened for a moment, but he shook away the cloud, and seizing his father's hand, he cried laughingly:—

"I doubt, my dear father, that the reception which you gave him when he was last here, will ever encourage him to a second

venture. Be sure, father, that he shall never intrude under my auspices. But sir——”

He paused. He felt the necessity of prudence.

“Well—but what?” said the veteran.

“Nothing *now*, sir;—but, is it not near the dinner hour? I confess to an amazing appetite.”

The veteran smiled grimly.

“You shall have some dinner. Meanwhile, sir, not to provoke your appetite to a too intense degree, you shall join me in some wine-bitters.”

And the stomachic was resorted to, and the parties smacked their lips after it.

“To a dragoon, sir, in our service,” said the young officer, “food and drink become primary principles. Our supplies are served so capriciously, that it is a rule with the dragoon to eat and drink whenever opportunity offers. If he dines with you this hour, and another dinner offers the next, he welcomes it without any consciousness of the feast that he has just finished. And thus, eating inordinately one day, he will go without food for three, yet suffer little inconvenience.”

“That is the case with the Indians. I have known a Cherokee runner go eight days, on a trot ten hours per day, eating nothing but a handful of browned maize, some three times a day, and without seeming to feel hunger, or the want of meat; yet, put the meat before him and he will devour you ten pounds at a sitting.”

“Ten pounds, father?” exclaimed Carrie.

“On my life, true! You must not look upon the red-skin as a monster, Carrie. The white will do the same thing under similar circumstances, nay, eat his grandmother, and never need for his dishes the dressing of a Parisian cook. Nature is full of such seeming anomalies; and you are to estimate the performance by a regard to the previous endurance. Irregularity of food produces a spasmodic vigor of the stomach, which makes it capable of astonishing performances.

“But just in the same degree does the capacity for drink lessen under the same circumstances. Your starving man can not drink much safely, or without danger to the brain. He grows terribly wolfish and savage from drink when famished, and is

something of a madman. By the way, Willie, I do not find that old Madeira does me any hurt with the gout"—filling his glass as he spoke with the amber-hued beverage. The young man followed his example.

"Our physicians, sir, you are aware, recommend the *old* Madeira as beneficial in gout, and though the opinion is somewhat questioned, I do not see with what reason. You drink a drug as medicine, in gout, which is dissolved in the strongest alcohol. The drug itself passes into the circulation, and must affect the brain, and when you affect the brain, you necessarily affect the general health always. Now, what worse can old Madeira do?—unless, sir—and there lies the true difficulty—you drink more than the proper dose;—a danger which is always present when the medicine is so very palatable."

"I faith, you're right. I suspect that is the true distinction. There"—pushing away the bottle—"I will take no more to-day. You must finish it for yourself, Willie."

"As an old proverb hath it, father—'A short horse is soon curried!' and he pointed to the greatly-diminished measure in the decanter."

"Oh! do not apprehend that your allowance shall be short. There is a good supply above stairs, though my Lord Rawdon, and the young Irishman did play a famous stick among the bottles. They left half a dozen dead men, floored as completely as if the shilelah had been at work. Ah! Willie, I should like you to know Fitzgerald."

"Not, I trust, while his sword is at the bosom of my country. But enough of that. Ha! here is Congaree Polly."

And the great staring negro woman made her appearance with waiters, knives, forks, &c., all significant of preparations for the approaching dinner.

"By the way, Polly, what do you say to Little Peter for a husband?"

"Ki! Mass Willie, wha' I hab for say? Wha' Little Peter wants wid me?"

"Come! come! Polly, no highflying airs with me. Will you have Little Peter, or shall I send him over to milkwoman Lenah?"

"He kin tek [take] Lenah ef he want 'em."

"Then I must tell him you won't have him."

"Wha' for, Mass Willie, you bodder you' se'f wid nigger defections? Le' de niggas look out he own wife. I spec' Little Peter kin ten' to he own consarns."

"Well, as you please," said the major laughing — "you are all hypocrites together. But hark ye, Polly, have you looked in upon our prisoner down stairs. How does he get on?"

"He call me, leettle bit ago, when I bin guinet'rough de passage, and beg me gee 'em some water."

"Well, you gave him?"

"Yes, he drink de whole calabash. Den he shibber all ober, and say he berry cole, and beg me put leettle bit o' fire in de chimney."

"But you did not, woman?"

"Oh! yes! De man so cole, Mass Willie, and shibber so all ober;" and the wench suited the action to the word in very wintry fashion.

"Fire in midsummer! Fool! fool!" exclaimed the major of dragoons; and, whirling the astounded negro out of his way, he dashed down into the basement with the utmost speed of blood and limbs.

The instincts and the experience of the partisan soldier, were not easily mistaken. His sudden apprehensions were all realized. Dick of Tophet was nowhere to be seen, but the fragments of the ropes which had bound him lay about, half consumed by the fire; and the blazing torches cast upon the floor of the apartment, were beginning to blaze and crackle very merrily. Had the room been furnished with any inflammable material, the discovery made by the major would not have been in season to save the dwelling.

With one so prompt, cool, and energetic as our major of dragoons, it required but a few moments to extinguish the fire. Having done this, and in a close and hurried search about the premises, seen that the outlaw was really gone, and was nowhere lurking in the immediate precincts, Willie Sinclair hurried up stairs.

"One is never safe," said he, "let him be never so sure, particularly when there are women near him, no matter what the color. Their sympathies are so many weapons in the hands of the cunning. This rascal is off."

“Off!—and out of Benny’s hitch!” said the old man.

“Ay! and it is difficult to say what hitch, short of that which suspends him to a hickory, would make such a scoundrel sure. I was a fool to trust him out of my own sight, or to suffer any to approach him. But, it is a lesson that I will not forget. Get to the housetop, Carrie, and look out. We must prepare for every sort of danger!—a siege—perhaps a storm!”

CHAPTER XVII.

NEW CAUSES OF APPREHENSION.

THE operations of Dick of Tophet, however mysterious the proceeding might appear to those who know nothing of the resource and hardihood which were acquirable in such a civil war as that which raged in the Carolinas and Georgia during the last three years of the Revolution, were yet exceedingly simple. One would think that, tied hand and foot, his arms laced together behind his back, it would be impossible for the outlaw to make his escape without succor from another party. But the fire once accorded him by the slave, the rest was easy. Dick could easily simulate the sufferings of one seized with "the shaking agy." His "shibbering" imposed upon the sympathies and unquestioning simplicity of Congaree Polly; and a negro, even in midsummer, never needs an argument to establish the advantages of a blazing fire. Polly never hesitated to light the brands for Dick just as he required. He had no other service to seek at her hands; and, the moment she disappeared, the hardy ruffian thrust his feet over the blazing lightwood, and endured the scorching flame without shudder or retreat, until the cords snapped in twain which bound his legs together. He was greatly scorched and burnt, but he was tough, and however deficient in other virtues, he had that of endurance in perfection. He was now able to stand upon his feet, and to walk. Could he escape? Was he watched? Where were his guards? To answer these questions satisfactorily required some little time, and he proceeded to look into his situation with the greatest precaution. He occupied one of four rooms in a brick basement. These rooms were appropriated to inferior purposes. One was a lumber-room, the door of which was locked. This was opposite his own. Another was a "wash-room," and he

could hear the *blanchisseuse* at her operations within. The door was open. A common passage led to all, and by a stair-flight to the upper apartments. To these he had no desire to ascend, now that he was weaponless, and knew what sort of customer he should probably have to encounter in his attempt. It was quite clear that he was able to escape from the dwelling, but was it equally certain that he should succeed, unseen, in crossing the court, and getting into the cover of the woods? At all events these offered him the only chance of refuge. The effort must be made. Any peril which might follow him in flight was preferable to the certain doom which awaited him in his present bonds. He knew Willie Sinclair well. He knew what he had to expect in the camp of Marion to which he concluded himself to be destined. There was not a moment's hesitation in his adoption of the resolve to fly.

But in what manner was the question? He had made his observations, stealing from door to door of the several apartments of the basement, listening at each, peeping into them through crack and keyhole, and, out of the house, through door and window. The employment, by Sinclair, of most of the house-servants along the edge of the wood below—a fact which our outlaw now readily conceived—afforded him comparative freedom from detection while making his *reconnoissance*. The kitchen was some thirty yards from the house. Half-a-dozen little negroes were playing in front of it. Congaree Polly could be seen occasionally going to and fro. It required but five minutes to pass from the dwelling to a little copse on the right which gradually stretched away till it mingled with the trees of the avenue along the public road. This was the route which the outlaw proposed to take, as likely to afford the best shelter, and as, most probably, left unwatched by the scouting negroes.

But should he be encountered—his arms bound—no weapon in his grasp? The meanest negro of the plantation could, in such case—and he well knew, would—despatch him with a billet. The fierce outlaw shuddered at the thought of his defencelessness in such a danger. To die fighting was scarcely a subject of his fears at any time; but to be incapable of a blow; to see it descending, and from a negro's hand, and offer no resistance;—this was a fear which the ruffian could not contem-

plate without a shudder. If free to fly, he must be free to fight ! He must be able to lift his hands unmanacled, and to grasp a weapon in them.

It is surprising how soon one finds means and resources where the will and courage are not wanting. How thought meets necessity, and ingenuity extricates strength from shackles. Will and courage are the true gods of circumstance, and supply the tools as well as the opportunity. Now, base, bloody, brutal as he was, Dick of Tophet had these qualities in large degree. With one or more other virtues he might have been a great man. Had his education trained his sensibilities and tastes, equally with his nerves and muscles, he might have substituted the name of hero for that of outlaw. As it was, he was capable of great things in the latter character. He conceived the process by which to release his arms from the rope ; he had but to exercise the same firmness in the process that he had shown while his ankles had been held above the flame of the blazing light-wood and he could be free ! The performance was a more tedious as well as trying one, but if his endurance held, it was as certain in its results.

Conceive now the awkwardness of this proceeding, as we watch his operations. His arms are fast tethered together behind his back, the wrists secured by the ropes with a space of a few inches between them. It was as Benny Bowlegs boasted, "a powerful hitch"—such as it would have been impossible for any physical strength to rend asunder. The knot was crossed just beneath the small of the outlaw's back. He calculated all his difficulties nicely ; then, with his feet, drew one of the blazing brands from the fireplace out upon the hearth. This done he deliberately let himself down upon the floor, in a half-sitting, half-lying posture, with the cord directly over the blaze. In this position he could see nothing of the operation—only *feel* ! His clothes took fire. He rolled himself over upon the floor and thus extinguished it ; rolled himself back over the flame, and was again in a blaze ! He had recourse to the same expedient as before, of rolling upon his back, until the flame was subdued. Thrice did he require to save himself in this manner, and terrible was the suffering which he endured. His back was in a blister—his neck—his very hair was seized by the flame !

But such was his coolness and resolution that he persevered until the cords snapped apart that bound him, and his arms were free; then he leaped to his feet, and in the joy which he felt, in spite of all his pain, he could scarce forbear whooping aloud his triumph. Let the prisoner, in a similar "hitch" take note of the process by which it may be undone, and if he has the courage to endure, he has in his own hands the means of his escape.

The mind's conscious triumph almost subdues the body's sufferings. Our Dick of Tophet suffered truly, but not so much at this moment, as he was destined to suffer a few hours later. His anxiety helped somewhat to subdue the intensity of his pains. He had trembled while his experiment was in progress, not because of the pain, but lest he should be interrupted. But our major of dragoons was too busy with the family above stairs—the outlaw could hear the subdued tones of their voices, while he stole through the passage;—and Congaree Polly was engaged in the solemn duty of spreading the table for dinner. She had passed up-stairs and down, and from the house to the kitchen, twice, while the prisoner was undergoing his self-imposed infliction of fire. He had heard her progress, and then it was that his heart swelled, and his frame trembled with apprehension. It was over! His limbs were free, and he must be prompt if he would escape. He had no time to think of burnt clothes, shrivelled hair, and blistered back and arms. His sleeves were burnt, his arms scorched and blackened from wrist to elbow;—but he was free. His hands were free—his feet! He allowed them no delay. He gave himself a moment only to draw the brands from the hearth and lay them down together on the floor. He cursed the bare chamber in which he had been lodged that it contained no fuel, no furniture, no bed-clothes, no stuffs of any kind which could be made to contribute to the rapid spread of the fire. Should the house suddenly break out into flame, his chances of escape would be increased; and then what a fine turn of vengeance would he have done the class of "harrystocrats" that he so much hated!

He did what he could, in the brief moment allowed him to effect his vindictive and destructive object. He piled the blazing *lightwood* upon the floor, and left it to do its pleasure, even as Willie Sinclair found it.

The latter fortunately came in season to stifle the flame which had already communicated to the floor. It required but a few moments to draw the brands apart, and cast water upon the burning fragments.

"Fool that I was!" he muttered, as he was thus employed, "to suffer a negro—and a woman too—to approach the scoundrel!" and thus muttering and feeling, he made his way upstairs and sounded his bugle thrice to summon to the house his two scouting negro-fellows, and such others as they might have gathered about them.

"But where is the dog—where is Tiger all this time? I had thought to ask after him before. Had he been about the dwelling this villain never would have ventured nigh. At all events we should have had warning of every one of the rascal's movements."

"Little Peter been tek' Tiger wid 'em to de wood," answered Congaree Polly.

"Ah! that accounts for it! I can not blame him, for Tiger would be quite as serviceable on the scout as here. But we must now have them all back, Benny, Peter, Tiger—all that we can gather together. We must contract our forces if we would make them answer any good purpose. To encounter these rascals properly, we must draw them out of the wood. We are quite a match for them, I think, if they venture to attack the house."

And Willie Sinclair again sounded the bugle for the return of the negroes.

"What a determined rascal!" exclaimed the veteran, meditating the outlaw's escape. "Who could have thought it? And how the scoundrel must have suffered! What hardihood and endurance. By Jove, sir, if that fellow could have been caught young, and trained properly, he would have become famous."

"Yes, indeed! We know him of old. He is capable of the most desperate things. Let me tell you, sir, his scorplings must have been a few degrees severer than your twinges of gout!"

"And then the resource!"

"Yes, it reminds me of an affair that took place at the capture of Orangeburg, when Fisher held the garrison by Sumter. Among the prisoners were two notorious outlaws, Cooper and Pen-

darvis. They were intrusted to the care of two whigs, Travis and Duesto; Travis, by the way, being a cousin of the Captain Travis, of Edisto, of whom we have spoken. No doubt that the persons would have been tried and hung when they had reached Belleville; but the two men having charge of them, were impatient of any such tedious process of getting rid of them. They were personal enemies of the prisoners, and the latter gave them some trouble along the road, requiring, every now and then, to be pricked forward with the bayonet. They were both handcuffed together, the left arm of Cooper being riveted to the right of Pendarvis. As the evening approached, Travis proposed to Duesto, to shoot the prisoners, and thus relieve themselves from the trouble in respect to them. The measure was agreed on, and both fired at the same moment. The two handcuffed men fell together, Pendarvis sprawling completely over the body of Cooper. The former was slain outright, the latter only wounded slightly. But he pretended to be dead and lay quiet. The murderers ascertained that Pendarvis was dead, and they presumed that Cooper was also. But to make sure, Travis run his bayonet through Cooper's neck, the wounded man feeling and hearing the steel as it grated in the sand below him. Yet he was cool and hardy enough still to remain quiet, and so they were left on the roadside, not a mile from the village. When they were gone, Cooper recovered, and threw off the body of Pendarvis. But, handcuffed to the dead man, with the use of his own right only, how was he to extricate himself? The hitch seems to have been more sure than that of our Dick of Tophet. But he had similar resources. He dragged the body of Pendarvis, who was a very large and portly person, to the woods, there he found a couple of lightwood knots; he laid the fettered hand of the dead man upon one of these knots, and with the other he beat it to a jelly, then withdrew it from the shackle; and, wounded in the body, with a bayonet thrust through the neck, feeble from loss of blood, the stubborn scoundrel made off, carrying with him the handcuffs, till he got down to Fletcher's blacksmith shop, where he had the fetters stricken off, and made his way finally in safety to his home in the Forks of Edisto. He is living yet, and, I am sorry to say, is as great a rogue and tory as ever."

"The fellow was a hero, sir—and I rejoice that such hardy courage is engaged on the right side."

"The right side with him, and most of the same kidney, is that which promises most plunder. In less than three months, he will probably find his way to Marion's camp, imploring to be received to mercy, and professing the greatest penitence for his evil deeds. Courage and endurance are no doubt admirable virtues in a soldier, but they are such as we are just as apt to find in the bosom of a sturdy ruffian. All of these rascals with whom we are now threatened are in the service of his Britannic majesty."

"D—n 'em! I don't care in whose service they profess to be, if I can only get a shot at them. But, for this infernal gout, Willie, I should answer confidently against a score of the scamps; but wheel me up to yonder window, and let me have my pistols. By the Lord Harry, but I long to have a crack or two at a scoundrel before I cease to kick. I feel that a little excitement in my head will lessen the infernal twitchings in my foot. Oh! for ten years that I have lost—I may say in doing nothing."

"I would to Heaven, sir, that you had twenty back, and were fighting on the right side."

"Oh! d—n the side!" cried the old man, now thoroughly roused and excited. "Devil take the side when a fight's going for'a'd! That's not the time to discuss the rights of the question. Wheel me to the window I say, Willie, and let me have a hand in the game. The pistols, Carrie, the old dogs! I will refresh their memories with a good feed."

"Here they are, papa," cried Lottie, running up. "Here they are! Shall I load 'em for you, papa?"

"Load 'em for me! Hear that, Willie! What think you of my putting Lottie in small-clothes, and making her my henchman? Ha! ha! And who taught you to load pistols, hussy?"

"Oh! I can load them, papa: I've seen brother Willie load 'em often, and I watched him. First you put in the powder, you know—there's the little charger—then the wadding, and then the bullet—and you wad that too, papa."

"By the Lord Harry she does seem to know all about it! Well, you shall load one of them, Lottie, while I load the other.

Now, let us see how you put your education to use. Right! That is the measure."

And, really, the little creature showed that she had watched the process closely; she proceeded to her task with equal promptness and propriety.

"That will do for ramming the powder down, Lottie. There's a rule in rhyme for ramming, Lottie, which you will remember:—

"‘Ram powder light,
But bullet tight!’

Good! I see you know all about it, my girl. You shall be a soldier's wife, Lottie."

"Yes, papa: I shall be Lord Edward's, papa; he's such a nice, handsome, brave cavalier!"

"What! so ambitious, little Lottie! But that can't be. Lord Edward is for Carrie, and you must not think to rival your sister, Lottie."

"Oh! she shall have all my rights, papa," cried Carrie, with a slight suffusion of the cheek, as she was employed parading swords and pistols for her brother; "I relinquish in Lottie's favor."

"Yes, papa, sis don't want Lord Edward. She's for another sort of cavalier. Don't you remember the song she made:—

"‘There was a gallant cavalier.’"

"Hush, Lottie, hush, child!" said Carrie, unnecessarily flushed in the face.

"Let her speak, Carrie," said the old man. "She is evidently far advanced in a damsel's peculiar education. She is preparing herself to be a soldier's bride."

"It must be Lord Edward, papa."

"Well, if you will be your sister's rival, it is at your own peril: but where's Willie gone?"

The major of dragoons had left the house, and the veteran now for the first time heard the distant baying of bloodhounds in the woods below, significant of a hunt in progress. It was these sounds which had called him off from the party; and, whispering to Carrie to keep a sharp look-out from the upper story, he stole out, well armed, to join the negroes, who had thus far failed to answer the requisitions of his bugle.

He found Benny on the alert—Peter was scouting with the dog Tiger.

"He must come in," said the major. "These fellows will capture him."

"Nebber fear for Little Peter, Mass Willie; dem blackguard nebber guine catch 'em."

"But we want him here, Benny. We shall need him and many others, I fear. That rascal Hell-fire Dick has got off."

"Git off! Hell-fire Dick git off! How he git off, out o' dat hitch I put on 'em?" demanded the negro in consternation.

Briefly, the major told the story of the good services of Congaree Polly.

"Dat gal will be de deat'of me yit!" cried Benny Bowlegs. "And wha for done now?"

"Fall back and protect the house. We may look for an attack from these scoundrels. It is evident that Dick has not yet joined them, or he would stop their trailing. He now knows where I am. He knows that I have no support."

"Wha'! and whay's Benny Bowlegs? Enty he's yer!" And he dropped the butt of the shot-gun of his master, with which he had armed himself, heavily upon the ground, with the air of an old soldier who knew his strength. "And whay's Little Peter? Little Peter guine fight like de debbil, Willie Sinclair, when de scratch come!"

"I hope so, Benny; so we'll have Little Peter in as soon as possible." And he prepared to sound for him.

"Le' me gee 'um a call, Mass Willie; Little Peter comphrehen's my music better dan your'n."

And the fellow blew three peculiar *notes* on his hunting-horn—an instrument with which all southern negroes are pretty familiar, and which the cowdriver and the hog-minder employ as much as the deer-hunter. Soon they heard Peter's response; and before many minutes the fellow made his appearance, followed by Tiger. The dog was lively, keen, wistful, and impatient—eager, apparently, to retrace his steps to the woods, where still, at moments, the deep, distant baying of his own species was to be heard.

"See how he bristle up!" said Little Peter, pointing to the dog.

"I sooner hab Tige dan half ob dem foot-sodgers!" quoth Benny, rubbing down the dog's bristles.

The major did not seem to heed what was said. He mused a while, then remarked:—

"We have men enough for our weapons, Benny, if not enough for these outlaws."

"Hab 'nough for dem too, maussa."

"I hope so! I trust we shall have more in another hour. Meantime, it might be well to gather up a dozen of the field hands. They will fight at a pinch."

"Some o' dem, maussa. But it must be a *hard* pinch, I tell you. Let me stand behind Bullhead Dabe, Slick Sam, and Snubnose Martin, an' I mek' 'em fight. Ef you say so, I kin sen' off, and bring up tree, seben, fibe ob de boys."

"Do so; send Peter at once. Where's the indigo-field, this year?"

"Jest a mile off, back ob de settlement."

"It's 'most time for first cutting, Benny."

"Two week off, at furdest, maussa. Ha! you ain't forgit how to mek' a crop!"

"The hands are not there?"

"No, sah! dey're working in de corn jest now; and dat's only tree quarters ob a mile. Set off, you, Little Peter, and bring up Bullhead Dabe, and Slick Sam, and Snubnose Martin; and don't you say noting 'bout de sawt ob work we hab for 'em; and don't you stop for talk wid any ob dem woman. Woman is always sure for spile de sport ob sodger gemplemans. As for you' gal, Congaree Polly, 'member I owe 'em a licking, and ef *you* no 'habe [behave] yourself decent an' orderly, I hab for gee um. Wha' you tink, tis *him* let dat d—d polecat, Debbil Dick, out ob de hitch I mek'."

"You no tell me so, Uncle Benny! I lick 'em mese'f!" exclaimed Little Peter indignantly. "Wha' he hab for do wid Debbil Dick?" and he looked fiercely inquisitive; and, as he said afterward, he felt "sassy like a wild-cat."

"Nebber min' dat!" quoth Benny. "Be off on you trotters. Lef de dog. We's maybe want 'em yer."

Par parenthese, we may mention, that a nickname, derived from an event or a characteristic, sticks wonderfully to a plan-

tation-negro. Bullhead Daby, and Slick Sam, had their epithets from characteristic qualities; Snubnose Martin was distinguished by the most contemptible of his features, one of the meanest and "onnaterallest leetle bits of noses," according to Benny, that ever dared to stand out from a broad lake of face; a sort of petty islet in the sea of Acheron. Congaree Polly was so named in contradistinction to Wassamasaw Polly—an other woman on the same plantation. The prefixes, in both cases, were derived from their places of birth. We may add that it was no uncommon thing to find the whites similarly discriminated by the common people. There were the Savannah river and the Edisto Huttos for example; the Santee and Ashepoo and Edisto Baltezegars, &c.; and, in all these and many other instances, the families were found on opposite sides in the war.

Little Peter was off in a moment to bring up his recruits. Meanwhile, the sounds of the hunt from below seemed to approach. The baying of the beagles could be heard distinctly, and the cries of the hunters cheering them on, were now distinguished.

"We must put ourselves under cover, and in readiness. We may have to stand a siege, Benny."

"God be praise, Mass Willic, we kin all fight like de debbil." Benny, you will perceive, was piously inclined.

"If we can keep them off, for a single hour, Benny, we shall ask no odds."

"Wha' you speek in dat single hour, maussa?"

"Peyre St. Julien, with a company of my battalion, Benny."

"Ha! I lub to hear 'bout battalion. Battalions is better dan rigiments."

"Rather! I wish these scoundrels to besiege us, Benny, and would have them come on with confidence."

"Da's right; for ef Cappin St. Julien is a-coming, den we hab de blackguards in a trap."

"Exactly! There were only four of them last night, but there may be more this morning. I suspect they have been joined by others of the gang."

"De more de better! Den de buzzard will hab better chance at picking, and moutbe, won't nose up so many of my sheep."

Benny, like most *drivers* on a plantation, usually spoke of it, with all its chattels, as his own. So, discussing the prospects before them, the two took their way to the house, the dog following them, but with some reluctance.

Here, Willie Sinclair made all his dispositions for defence. Benny brought into requisition certain little negroes, who were set to watch from housetop, tree, and kitchen. Congaree Polly, rather in disgrace, and terribly humbled, was sent up to the roof, and her head, looking pilloried and very black in the face, was thrust through the scuttle; and, with watches set, and weapons loaded, Willie Sinclair bade the cook bring in the dinner as she could—his father showing himself quite impatient at the prospect of having his roast lamb and boiled mutton, upon which he prided himself, overdone. The orders of his son propitiated him.

“A cook that does her dishes to rags, Willie,” quoth he, “is an emissary of the devil.”

“An opinion,” replied the other, “for which my friend Captain Porgy would embrace you, sir, across the table.”

“Porgy—Captain Porgy, sir? Is it possible, Willie Sinclair, that your miserable service requires you to associate with persons having such detestable names? Why, sir, among gentlemen, even the fish of that name is only held fit for negroes.”

“Sir, I believe, with Shakspeare, that ‘a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.’”

“And I don’t believe in any such doctrine. Names are not only things, sir, but they are significant of virtues. Call a rose a radish and it bites the tongue. And that any respectable service should accord a commission to a man named Porgy is absolutely monstrous.”

“Wait, sir, till you know my friend Porgy.”

“God forbid, sir, that I ever should.”

“When you do, sir—as I am now sworn that you shall know him—I will wager a wagon-load of continental money against a Jacobus, that you offer him not only a perpetual seat at your table, but the entire management of your cook. Captain Porgy, sir, is the only wit and buffoon, sir, that I ever met, or heard of, who never suffered you once to forget that he was all the while a gentleman.”

And the party sat down to dinner.

"Now," said the *veteran*, "if these rascals will only hold off till we have swallowed dinner, I shall be in better mood for the conflict."

"Thought like an Englishman!" said the major of dragoons.

"And how should I think but as an Englishman, and where do you think the American or any other race, would think differently? Your rascally French allies are not to be quoted at all in such matters."

"And yet they are held to be perfect masters in such matters."

"Ay, sir, as cooks, to dress and prepare the food, sir, but not to eat it. Give them what credit you please, *as cooks*, but the grace, taste, and general ability, with which an Englishman eats, is unequalled, sir, by any people."

"The subject is one of endless ramifications, sir, and would require for its discussion more practical experience than I have yet had in such matters; but we may safely assume, I think, that a people who know so well how to prepare the dishes, is hardly wanting in the ability to do them proper justice."

"Well, sir, is that mutton to your liking?"

"Exactly, sir; and you see I am proving my ability after our poor American fashion. In respect, however, to the effect which a good dinner, not stinted, has upon the fighting man, you should hear my friend Porgy. He says, that an American should never be forced into battle with a full stomach. He admits the British to be differently constituted, but thinks that, even with them, the appetite should never be fully pacified before fighting. With all classes, he is of opinion, that the better course is to put the dinner before them—a good one—as good and tempting as possible—let them see it, till their eyes become fascinated—nay, let them taste it, but only taste—and then, let the drums beat and the bugles sound to quarters. Soldiers, thus tantalized, he asserts to be the most dangerous customers in the world—absolutely wolfish—who will then tear and rend their foes, having no fear; each man having, as it were, a personal feeling of revenge to gratify, as if robbed by his enemy of the choicest blessing of his life."

"He's no fool, that fish! There's sense in the notion."

"They tell a good story," continued the major, "of the mode which he employed to convert a timid fellow into a desperado. Just before the beginning of our Revolution——"

"Rebellion, sir."

"Well, sir, rebellion be it! I care very little *now*, for the distinction."

The father growled, and pushed the Madeira toward the son.

"Drink, sir, and imbibe more sensible notions at once of names and things."

"Long life and a good appetite for all good things, sir, to the end of the chapter! Carrie, my dear, wet your lips with us——"

"Well, sir, to your story."

"Porgy, sir, who, before the war, was a rice-planter on the Ashepoo, a *bon vivant*, and fast liver, though a great reader, and philosophical humorist, was employed by one of the Fenwicks to answer for him as a friend, in an interview with a gentleman who bore the challenge of one Major Pritchard. Porgy would have declined, as Fenwicke was supposed to be constitutionally timid; but the young fellow appealed to him with a good deal of pathos. He was, in fact, almost friendless on the occasion; had quarrelled with his family and associates, and was rather in Coventry, in consequence of some gaming transactions. Porgy's good nature made him yield; but he felt the awkwardness of going out with a person who might show the white feather. How was he to prevent such a discreditable exhibition? As I have said, Porgy is something of a philosopher, and entertains peculiar notions of the effect of food, and the various sorts of it, upon the moral as well as physical nature. Red pepper, for example, he avers to be an article, which, taken in quantity, will irritate the temper, but lessen the nerve. He has similar opinions of other condiments, spices, and even drinks, in lessening the courage. Whiskey, he holds to be decidedly hurtful to valor;——"

"Gad, there's something reasonable in the fellow's philosophy. I have that notion myself."

"He says that when our militia-men run——"

"As they are monstrous apt to do!"

"It is due to the fact that they drink whiskey, and not Jamai-

ca, which he values much more as a good moral stimulus. But, like you, sir, he has a better faith in Madeira, than in any other known beverage."

"I fancy I shall like that fellow, Porgy."

"You will, sir; but to my story. The arrangements made for the affair between Fenwicke and Pritchard, the time fixed, and all adjusted, Porgy took his principal home to his house the morning before the affair was to take place. This, he did, under the pretext of avoiding the sheriff's officers. He kept him locked up in an upper chamber, and left him to himself for twelve hours, on a slender supply of biscuit and Madeira. Before noon the supply was exhausted, and the housekeeper had no keys, and but three cold-boiled Irish potatoes—which Porgy esteems fine food for soldiers—were to be found in an open cupboard. These Fenwicke devoured without salt or butter. At midnight Porgy made his appearance and made a thousand apologies. Fenwicke was compelled to look satisfied; but when he asked for supper, there was no satisfactory answer. Porgy pleaded some singular disappointments in his supplies. But he got out fresh biscuit and over a bottle of Madeira, he succeeded in putting Fenwicke into tolerable humor. They retired and both slept late; but descended finally to an admirable breakfast in which everything that could excite appetite was displayed. Fenwicke's eyes glistened. He rubbed his hands. He was as hungry, by this time, as a dragoon's horse on a long scout. He sat down, but was allowed to swallow only two or three mouthfuls, when Porgy pulled out his watch and started up in alarm. 'Good Heavens, Mr. Fenwicke,' said he, 'we shall be too late unless we go at a gallop. It is within forty minutes of the time, and we have three miles to get to the place of meeting.' Fenwicke looked at him like a hyena. 'Heavens, sir, I am famished!' 'Never mind,' quoth Porgy, 'we shall only have a better appetite after the affair is over. Everything shall be kept warm. See to it, Tom—on your life, see to it!' he cried to his cook—a famous fellow, by the way, sir, the best cook in the army—and thus speaking, he hurried Fenwicke off to the horses which had previously been got in readiness. They had scarcely mounted when Porgy called for a bottle of porter, which he divided between himself and his

companion. 'This will stay your stomach, sir,' he said, and this was all he allowed him, except a single biscuit, which Fenwicke snatched up from the table."

"But why the porter, sir?"

"To produce a more morbid condition of the stomach. To divert the impression as much as possible from the brain. Such was his theory at least. His philosophy is a curious one, and he insists greatly upon the important uses of porter in the case of nervous men, with an active imagination."

"Well, sir, what was the result?"

"Why, that Fenwicke was sufficiently angry, on the gallop, to quarrel with his second, goaded, it may be, by the provocative sort of conversation in which Porgy indulged by the way. He reached the ground in this humor, was impatient of all control, impatient for the fight—came up to the ring in handsome style, rushed desperately in upon his antagonist, got a flesh wound on breast and arm, but succeeded in running Pritchard through the body."

Carrie Sinclair shuddered as she said:—

"But he did not kill him, Willie?"

"On the spot! Yet, the moment the deed was done, he nearly fainted, and could scarcely mount his horse. He staggered off like one mortally hurt himself."

"The fellow was no coward," said the old man, "only tenderhearted."

"Porgy asserts that no man is absolutely a coward or absolutely brave; that all depends on training; that we are all, more or less, the creatures of circumstance; and that, in particular conditions of mind, or body, or situation, we are audacious or timid;—that every man, the most brave, has moments of fear,* and that the most timid, under particular training, or accidental influences, will show the most audacious valor; that the stomach has more to do with it than the brain or heart; and that the greatest secret in the training of the soldier, is proper food, of the proper kind, at the proper time, and properly cooked. He professes to believe that his cook Tom has done more toward teaching his men how to fight, than all the training of all the officers."

* This was subsequently the opinion of Napoleon and Wellington.

"I shall like that fellow Porgy, I fancy. You may bring him here, Willie, should a chance offer, as soon as your insurrection is over. But I do not believe in all Mr. Porgy's doctrines. For my part, I may safely say that I never knew the sentiment of fear in my life."

The major laughed—then suddenly exclaimed, as if in consternation:—

"Take care, Lottie, you are about to tread on papa's foot!"

The old man screamed—throwing up both hands:—

"For God's sake, my child!"

The child had never moved—was sitting quietly at the table—not near the gouty member! Such was the power of the imagination, that the old man had never exercised a single sense, before he screamed. The major of dragoons laughed merrily. The veteran was fairly caught. He stormed out at the commentary upon his confident self-applause, which was the natural result of the apprehensions which could so easily be awakened, and so completely revealed.

"Zounds, sir! Do you make *me* a subject of your merriment!"

But the laughter of the son, and even of the girls, could not be suppressed; and, in a moment after, the veteran himself joined in it.

"Ah! Willie, we are but poor devils, the best of us, with all our pretension! Pass the bottle, sir; the gout will make any man a coward!"

At this moment the sounds of a horn were heard within the enclosure, and Congaree Polly made her appearance, to report, that the famous Pete Blodgit was advancing from the foot of the garden, bearing a white flag.

"The scoundrel! Shoot him down, Willie."

"No, sir, it would only be a bullet wasted upon a buzzard. Let us see what the fellow has to report, and to demand. Our policy is to gain time. We want but an hour, if that! But one hour!"

Thus speaking, he rose from the table, and prepared for the reception of the ambassador.

"What is that hour to bring forth! Why does he say an

hour?" muttered the old man. His self query had suddenly set him to think.

"Yes," said he solemnly. "Oh! God, what may not an hour bring forth!" and he caught up his pistols, and bade them wheel him to the window which he had undertaken to defend.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FIRST SHOT.

PETER BLODGIT, flag-bearer from the enemy, was welcomed at the entrance of the dwelling by Benny Bowlegs. He was made to dismount and enter the house by the veteran negro, much against his will. His demand was that some member of the household should come out to him; but Benny at once repudiated the suggestion with disgust.

"Wha' you talk 'bout, Pete Blodgit! You 'speck gemplemans to come out yer and 'tan 'pon he legs to talk wid you, and you poor buckrah a setting on you critter all de time? Lord ha' massy, I tell maussa, de kurnel, sich a t'ing, he come out wid de horsewhip. Git you down from you critter, Pete Blodgit, and 'tretch you legs in de passage tell maussa is ready to say—'Show de fellow in!'"

Like the servants of most of the lordly planters of that day, Benny Bowlegs had but small esteem for the class whom he described as "poor buckrah." For Pete Blodgit, as a sample of this class, in particular, his disgust and contempt was without limit.

"Hitch you' critter to de tree, Pete Blodgit, and walk in. Walk *light*, you ye'r, and not heabby, wid dem cow ledder shoes o' yourn, for de kurnel likes a pusson to walk accordin' to he character. Ef you walk heaby, he say—'Can't be dat l'ote Blodgit hab de imperdence to walk into my house as ef he been somebody!'"

Pete was not the man to resent the scornful counsel thus received, though he was not so obtuse as not to feel it. He knew the sort of person with whom he had to deal, and his fears served to subdue his resentment. He obeyed implicitly—hitched his horse to the tree—the negro offering no assistance

—and, under Benny's escort, was walked into the basement passage—not suffered to ascend into the portion of the building which the family occupied. Here, after a few minutes' delay, he was confronted, to his great surprise, by the major of dragoons.

He thrust out his flag—a ragged handkerchief fastened to a hickory rod—at the approach of Willie Sinclair, half doubting all the while, that it would quite suffice for his protection. But the tones of the major's voice reassured him.

“Well, Blodgit, what have you got there?”

“A flag, major. It's for my purtection, you know, as I'm a a bearer of despatches.”

“Ah! you are rising in the world! Well, from whom do you bear despatches?”

“From the men what's in the woods, major.”

“And who are they?”

“Well, thar's a dozen on 'em quite. You'll find their names all to this dockyment.”

“Yes, but who do they represent? Is it a body of the military?”

“Yes, I reckon. They says so. They've got we'pons.”

“Are they British or Americans, Pete? Under which flag?”

Blodgit had not been duly tutored on this head. He was a little disquieted by the query; but a rapid thought, which taught him that, as Americans, the party would scarcely dare to question Major Sinclair, instantly suggested the propriety of reporting them on the other side.

“Well, major, I reckon they're sodgers of the king.”

“So! And you, then, have become a soldier of the king, Pete Blodgit?”

“Lord presarve me, major, no! I ain't no sodger no how, but a man of peace, and a lame pusson to boot. But they forced me to come, major, when I didn't want to, and they swore a most furrocious oath that ef I didn't they'd take my ears off. So that's the how and the why that you sees me hyar.”

The major readily received this statement as probable.

“Well, sir, and to whom are your despatches addressed?”

“Well, I reckon to the kurnel, sir, your father.”

"How can that be if they are soldiers of the king? My father is a loyalist you know."

"Ah! but they says he ain't."

"Briefly, Pete Blodgit, these fellows are outlaws, and fight on their own hook."

"Well, major, I reckon that's pretty nigh the raal truth in the matter."

Sinclair was not the man to waste time in idle distinctions, regarding such rascallions as were represented by Pete Blodgit. He knew quite as well as that worthy, the character of the sort of people with whom he dealt; but his object in the dialogue was to gain time. Hence his questions and remarks hitherto. But he had another object when he asked the names and number of the party in the woods.

"I reckon, major, there's nigh on to thirteen persons on horseback."

"Not counting yourself?"

"Oh! Lord, yes, sir. I aint to be counted at all. They makes me do what I'm a-doing."

"I can well believe it, my poor Pete. And now, my good fellow, for their names."

"Oh! I don't know 'em all, only some, but you'll read their names on the dockyment."

"Ah! did they all sign?"

"Yes, they did."

"Let me see the paper."

The bearer of despatches produced a dirty half sheet of that brown wiry paper, which, in sheets of enormous size, was of most common use in those periods, and the major read as follows:—

"To Kurnel Sinkeler :

"These, old Sinkeler, are to signify that ef you don't surrender up our friend and brother officer and sodger, Leftenant Joel Andrews sometimes called 'Hell-fire Dick,' of his royal majesty's regiment of loyal rangers, third company of foragers, we'll have your heart's blood out of your body, and thar shant be stick or stone standing of your big house after we've gone through it. These is to say to you that you must give him up

to the barrer of dispatches, in hafe an hour after you reads 'em, or you may expeck the eternal vengeance of all consarned.

[Signed] "SAM BRYDONE [*Skin-the-Serpent*].
 "RAFE BRUNSON [*the Trailer*].
 "JOE BEST.
 "ZEKE RODGERS.
 "JACK HALLIDAY.
 "WM. TOLAND.
 "BENJ. NELSON."

Major Sinclair smiled quietly as he read the precious epistle.

"And you say, Blodgit, that there are thirteen of these rascals in the woods?"

"Thar's the names."

"Scoundrel! Do you dare to lie to me, when I know that there are but seven of them—all told."

"Lord bless you, major, but thar's thirteen as I'm a mortal sinner."

"Didn't you tell me that all signed. Here are only seven names."

"All that could sign, major. Some kaint write."

The lie was prompt enough; but Sinclair knew that all such would have surely made their marks, the object of the writers being to impress the garrison with their strength and numbers.

"Back to your fellows, and tell them, from me, that we are ready for them were they twice their number; and do you, Blodgit, thank your stars that I do not have you hung up to a swinging limb for bringing me such an impertinent paper."

"Lord, major, I couldn't help myself."

"I believe that; and did I not so believe—did I think you came willingly, I should hang you up in five minutes. Be off now while your skin is whole."

"But, major, they're most mighty detarminate persons—all on 'em—mighty furrocious, and they've got rifles and muskets, and three mighty furrocious dogs—you kaint stand up agin' 'em, with only one poor rifle and double barrel, and they'll not let you git to close quarters."

Sinclair was pleased that Blodgit noted his armory. The weapons had been studiously put in sight—all, at least, that

our major desired he should see. He smiled at the speech of the other—smiled scornfully—and extending his arm, he said:—

“Be off, Master Blodgit; and if you’ll take my counsel you’ll take the back track as soon as these rascals shall come on. You have no taste for fighting, I know, and there are too many of them to suffer you to share any of the plunder should they succeed. Your share of the game will be its dangers only. Do not suffer me to draw bead or blade upon you—off, and say to those who sent you, that we shall welcome them with wagon-whips if they venture within these grounds.”

Blodgit, with a cringing humility bowed himself out, and under Benny’s escort mounted his nag and departed, the speed of his horse being accelerated by a smart application of a hickory, which Benny Bowlegs carried in his hand, very much as a field-marshal carries baton or truncheon.

“De mean son ob a skunk! And wha’ is we for do now, Mass Major.”

“Hither, Benny! Have you got the boys below?”

“All dere, sir, in de berry room wha’ Debbil Dick leff. Dere’s Bull-Head Daby, and Slick Sam, and Snub-Nose Martin, and Cæsar Fogle, and Barney de fiddler, and two, tree more.”

“Will they fight, Benny?”

“Ef you only le’ ’em see you and yer you, jest when de time come for knock about, den he’ll fight.”

“We’ll keep *them* then, for close quarters! We have one gun, at least, for each quarter of the house, and pistols for half-a-dozen men. Let us now to our preparations, Benny. Call up Little Peter.”

Benny disappeared, and Willie Sinclair, muttering as he went:—

“We must seem to consult the old man, at all events,” took his way toward the apartment where the veteran was keeping watch at the window he had undertaken to defend. Here, a brief conference ensued between the two, in which the son made a full report of what had taken place between himself and Blodgit, showed the insolent despatch which he had brought, listened patiently to the fierce outbreak of the old aristocrat as he read the document, and then patiently brought him back to the sub-

ject of the proposed defence. In doing this, our young major, whom the war had made a politician as well as partisan, adroitly insinuated into the old man's mind all the plans which he had himself formed, for the encounter with the marauders. The veteran was easily imposed upon, and the son left him at his post while he arranged the defence of the house. The negroes were each planted at his post, arms assigned them for close quarters where they were not known to be good shots—and few negroes are good shots—and this done, and Benny Bowlegs and Little Peter, and another fellow, being armed with fowling pieces or rifles, Willie Sinclair hurried up to the chamber for a conference with his sisters.

The upper rooms of the house commanded an extensive view of the whole scene of operations, broken only by occasional clumps of wood, and masses of forest. Before it stretched the avenue, a noble colonnade of oaks and cedars—on the right an open field which had been planted in wheat, but which was now bare, with here and there a pine sapling growing, three or four years old. On the left of the avenue was the wood through which “Debbil Dick” had already made his way, seeking a surer cover in the thickets on the opposite side of the public road. Immediately around the dwelling there was an open area of less than twenty acres, the space only interrupted by kitchen and out-houses. Below, and between the house and the woods where the outlaws were now harbored, was the garden containing some three acres, and near this, in fact adjoining, was the outlaw ~~public~~ region—a spot which, at another time, might have been sufficiently attractive to our outlaws. But for the ambitious ideas of Dick of Tophet, the outlaws would probably have been quite content with a general cleaning of the hen-roosts.

But to note all these parts of the enclosure required that the four rooms of the upper story should all be occupied with vigilant watchers. In each, accordingly, a negro or two, male or female, was assigned a station. To these, no arms were given. The weapons, whether at close quarters or long shot, being more available from below, in the second story. The hand to hand conflict could only take place below, in or around the basement, or upon the outer steps of the dwelling. The doors opening upon them were now closed, and a couple of sturdy negroes as-

signed to each. For a close struggle the weapons were ample against so small a force as threatened. In addition to swords and pistols, there were knives—every negro carries his own, adequate to slaughtering a steer or hog, or slitting the weasand of a buck;—there were hatchets and clubs of hickory, and even tongs and poker were put in convenient places, ready for the hand-to-hand conflict.

“I have no notion that these things will be required, Carrie,” said Willie Sinclair, “for I hardly think that these ruffians will be bold enough to make an assault now that they know I am here. Still, they are desperate men, and the thing is possible—particularly if they have been drinking. As yet, too, their chief leader, Devil Dick, has not appeared among them, and the belief that he is still here and in custody, may work them up to some audacious attempts. But I rather think that they will confine themselves to long shots, and all of them, it is probable, carry rifles. This requires that you should keep yourself and Lottie away from the windows. The negroes can not be easily seen, their black faces offering no such conspicuous contrast to the darkened rooms, as yours and Lottie’s would. Only see you that the negroes do not neglect the watch. They can see an object if moving, at thrice a rifle distance, and that will suffice to give us time to guard against all approaches. Only do not be agitated or alarmed. There is no great danger—none to you, my dear, so long as Willie Sinclair can strike a stroke, or lift an arm at all for your protection.”

“Do I not know it, Willie? As for the danger—look at me, Willie. Do I show fear?”

“You are a brave girl—worthy to be a soldier’s wife! and—if you hear a trumpet, you may look boldly up the avenue; for Peyre St. Julien will certainly be here before sundown.”

Then it was that the lips of the young girl trembled, and she said, putting her hand on her brother’s wrist:—

“But will he have his troop with him, Willie? Will the outlaws not intercept him, and with their rifles, from under cover——”

“Never fear! The sound of his bugle will be sufficient to disperse them. Where’s Lottie?”

"In the blue chamber."

"Let us go to her. You must keep her with you all the while. She may be tempted to show herself at the windows. Lottie!"

The child came.

"Lie down here, Lottie. Cover up. Keep close, and don't get up till sissy tells you. Will you lie down now for Brother Willie, and cover up, and keep close, and don't show yourself at the windows?"

"But Willie, I don't want to lie down. I don't want to sleep. I want to hear. I won't go to the windows. I will sit down with sissy. I know what you mean. There's going to be fighting among the soldiers; and I can't lie down in the bed, Willie, I can't, when there's to be fighting. I *must* sit up and hear; but I promise you, dear bubber Willie, that I won't go nigh the windows."

"Let her sit with me, Willie. I'll answer for her. She shall keep away from the windows. She has promised you."

"To be sure, Willie—when I promise, you know."

He kissed the child; Carrie threw her arms round his neck; then released him, and he hurried below; and, passing from room to room, he made all his preparations, and encouraged, by his frequent presence, his motley forces.

One of these, our old acquaintance, Ben Bowlegs, he drew aside from the rest.

"Ben," said he, "I am going to put you in position elsewhere. Take a pair of these pistols, and the short double-barrelled gun. Our true danger is from the kitchen. If these outlaws make a rush and get behind it, they will cover any window on this side of the house. You must get to the kitchen and hide yourself in the loft. There are two little windows in the back of it which will enable you to prevent them from taking shelter in that quarter. You must steal out and make your way thither at once, with the weapons I have mentioned. The post is so important that I would go there myself, but that I must not leave the house. I must see that the people do their duty here."

"Dat's sartinly de way, Major Willie. I bin t'ink 'bout de kitchen, mese'f."

"Quickly then, to your post, and before these fellows begin to attack."

"I gone, Major Willie! I gone!"

And, snatching up gun and pistols, Benny Bowlegs rapidly darted across the space of thirty yards, which separated the kitchen from the dwelling. Thus, with all his precautions taken, our major of dragoons ascended to the place where the veteran was keeping watch, seated comfortably in his arm-chair, his game leg upon its cushions, and two great horseman's pistols in his clutches, with both muzzles ready to give tongues at the half-opened window. His position also enabled him to command one of the doors opening upon the central passage.

"I am not sure, sir," said the major, "that I have had quite as much dinner as I desired."

"Not the worse for it, Willie, if your man Porgy be right in his philosophy. But the things are unremoved. Fall to, if you think proper."

"No! I find it not so easy to eat now. Still that mutton was very fine."

"Yes, but there is a proverb against *cold* mutton. Hack away at that tongue, which I can warrant. It is home cured."

"Ay, and of a quality to cure a man of absenteeism."

"Would it could cure you, Willie!"

"It will not just now, sir. By the way, sir, my friend Porgy insists that the English proverb against cold mutton is all a mistake of taste; that mutton is really more preferable cold than warm."

"Egad, I should have ventured the opinion long ago myself, but that I never take ground against a proverb. I shall certainly be pleased to know this Porgy. Can he fight as well as philosophize?"

"That is the most remarkable of his characteristics—somewhat in the teeth of a proverb also. He fights like a bull-dog, and in action almost seems to lap blood. But he always professes a reluctance to go into action, and insists that nothing but training has kept him all his life from showing a white feather. Come, sir, let me fill you a glass of this Madeira."

"Why not, Willie? I confess to relishing my wine more to-day, than I have done any day within the last six months."

“What! including the time of my Lord Rawdon’s visit?”

“Ah!” with a deep sigh—“ah! no! That was an exception. I confess, Willie, that on that occasion I distinctly saw the ‘Bottle Reel.’”

“That was a serious error, my dear father,” said the son, with a grave shake of the head, “in the case of so *steady* a loyalist.”

“Get out, you varlet. Ha!—we are to have it.”

A wild scream from the woods, a shot, and the rattling of glass in the upper windows, silenced the conversation, and our major of dragoons was instantly upon the alert.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LEAGUER—THE RELIEF.

PETE Blodgit, glad to get off without hurt or hinderance from the Barony, whither he had gone only under compulsion of the outlaws, rode with due speed to the thicket where they harbored, and reported the ill success of his mission. The party there, in the absence of Dick of Tophet, was led by Sam Brydone, otherwise Skin-the-Serpent. Brydone was a fellow not very unlike his superior, possessing all his brutal and ruffianly qualities, but his merits only in degree. His cupidity was quite as great, if not greater; and this passion sufficed to urge upon him the assault of the Barony, where he calculated upon profitable pickings, quite as much as his desire to extricate his principal from the captivity into which he had unwarily fallen. As yet, the outlaws had no notion that Dick had escaped; and the plunder of the house was a desire that received an additional impulse in their minds, from the hope to rescue their comrade. They were encouraged by the report of Blodgit, as to the feebleness of the garrison—a single man, even though so well known and greatly feared as Willie Sinclair, not being regarded as likely to offer much resistance to a stout band of seven old forayers. This was the real number of the outlaws, not including Blodgit; their increase of force being due to the arrival of Zeke Rodgers, the fellow who owned the dogs, who had brought with him besides three others, Halliday, Toland, and Nelson, all Tories, whose taste for the regular service, under his majesty's officers, had gradually given way to the passion for a more free and easy disposition of their time and persons. They were, all of them, briefly speaking in the language of the country, *outlaws*—cattle-reivers, squatters, houseburners, and plunderers—unrestrained by any laws but those of force, and

reckless equally of all moral restraints, whether of God or of society. They prepared at once for the assault of the Barony.

But they had no plans, no designs—and simply calculated to operate by sheer force of numbers, and the terrors which they might inspire.

"You hear, boys," said Brydone, after Blodgit had made his report—"thar's but one white man we've got to deal with—Willie Sinclair. He's h-ll to fight, we know, but what's one man when we've got the we'pons? Old Sinclair's too lame to git out of his easy-chair, and the niggers ain't of no account, no how, in a scrimmage. What's a rifle, a shot gun, and a few puppy pistols? Not much; when hyar, you see, thar's four on us with rifles, and three with fowling-pieces. All we've got to do is smash the windows with a volley of buckshot from the guns, and then let the men what fires make a rush and git across the garden to the kitchen, and git into kiver behind that. The rifles kin watch doors and windows all the time. First, then, we'll creep up, close as we kin, to the garden-fence, pull off some of the palings, and steal up among the shrubs till we're nigh enough to blaze away. Then let drive at the windows, all three on you, with the shot-guns; then make a rush for the kitchen, and the boys with the rifles will keep their beads resting on door and window, so that any head that lifts to sight you, shall draw a bullet. You hears? Does you all onderstand?"

"All right, Sam," was the reply; and Halliday, Toland, and Nelson, the men carrying fowling-pieces, prepared for the part assigned them.

The rattling of the window-glass, shattered by the buckshot, which had disturbed the hobanobbing of the veteran and his son, indicated the performance of the first act in this simple little drama.

It sent Willie Sinclair, with due haste, to the upper chambers. He was quite aware that, beyond the smashing of the glass, there could be no damage done, unless his orders, that all parties should keep in cover as he placed them, had been disobeyed.

This was not the case. He found all safe, and Carrie Sinclair seized his arm, as he entered the room, which had chiefly

suffered from the shot—her eye flashing, and no tremor on her frame.

“They have begun, Willie, and now ought we not to have some weapons here? We could surely do something from this quarter, Willie.”

“No, Carrie, dear; there is no need to tax your valor. We must only try your patience and endurance, no small part of the education for a soldier and a soldier’s wife. Only keep Lottie close to the floor, and keep as closely to the floor yourself as possible. We are quite enough for these fellows below, and there we need all our weapons. But, hark!”

Pistol-shots were heard—one—two.

“That is Benny Bowlegs! I looked for it there. Down, Carrie—close, while I take a peep.”

Glancing obliquely through the half-closed shutter, in the direction of the garden, Willie suddenly raised the fowling-piece which he grasped, and fired instantly. He was about to discharge the second barrel, when he promptly drew back, and clasping Carrie about the waist, drew her to the floor with him. In another moment of time, a bullet passed between the shutters, and was buried in the angle of the opposite wall.

“You see, Carrie, you must keep close. These fellows watch every opening. Keep the negroes at the opposite windows. There is no cover on that side for the approach of the rascals within rifle distance. And now a kiss—I must go below. We have tickled some of the scamps, I am sure.”

He went below, and forcibly rolled his father back from his station at the window. In the anxiety of the veteran, he had leaned forward upon the jambs, with his pistol cocked and ready, and his game-leg upon the floor, the pillows upon which it rested having slipped off in the eagerness of his movement. He was groaning with pain, but, in his excitement, mentally unconscious of its cause.

“What’s done, Willie? Oh! I am hurt somewhere, Willie. I feel the pain of a wound, but where it is, sir, I can not tell, by Heaven!”

“In your foot, sir—your pillow was shot off, sir, and your game leg has got all the hurt.”

“Ah! so it is! There! there! Don’t touch it for your life,

Harry! I never let any one but Carrie touch it! She gives no pain. Call her down for a moment. You are too rough a nurse."

Carrie appeared, replaced cushions and foot, and was again driven up to the chamber.

"The girl is just as cool as an old soldier. She will make a soldier's wife, sir. Well, Willie, what has been done. There were shots from the kitchen, and above stairs? Did you fire?"

"Emptied one barrel of buck upon a fellow who was sneaking off among the box in the garden."

"Did you stretch him?"

"I think so. I seldom miss; and it could not be more than sixty yards off. But my flash drew a rifle-shot upon the window, and I dared not look."

"They are at the kitchen, are they?"

"They have been; but I suspect they have found the kitchen fires too warm at this time of day. I sent Benny Bowlegs there, well armed, to help the cook. They were his pistols that we heard."

"Benny is cool as a cucumber, and steady as a pine. He will not waste gunpowder. Ha! there is another volley. They must have some dozen guns."

"These discharges are all from fowling-pieces."

"Don't I know that, sir? But there would seem a dozen of them."

"Half the number, and double-barrels would give that fire. They have only broken a few more panes."

"The fools, to waste their ammunition."

"Their purpose is probably to make a rush for the house under the fire. I must look in upon the boys in the basement, and give them a drink all round."

And, turning a silver mug down upon the mouth of a decanter of Jamaica, Willie Sinclair supplied the negroes keeping guard in the great passage and below.

"Boys," he said to the latter, "we'll have a drink all round, that we may be better able to thrash these dirty rascals, should they dare to come. I'll give you drink, and you'll give them the devil. Benny Bowlegs, let me tell you, has already knocked over half a dozen or more, and I have stretched out

as many. I'm only afraid you'll have little or nothing to do."

"Only le' 'em come, maussa, da's all!" was the one response of all, as they drank—drank deep, as a negro knows how to drink—with head thrust out, lips trembling, and eyes already moistened with delight.

"Wait for the word, boys, that's all!"

Then as they began to jabber loudly with each other, promising and boasting of their future performances, our major stopped them—

"Shut up, boys, Barking dogs don't bite—remember that. Would you give tongue before you've got the scent? Not a word now! Wait till I give the word—wait till you see me at work—then take hold, and see that you make your teeth meet in the flesh!"

"Le' 'em come, young maussa—da's all!"

And giving them a second sup of the bottle, enough to enliven their courage without enfeebling their strength, Willie Sinclair hurried up-stairs with the empty decanter.

"There's a lull in the storm, Willie."

"Ay, sir, the scamps are in consultation doubtless. They have no head, sir; though where that scoundrel, Devil Dick, may be, it is difficult to conjecture. These fellows really have no plans. They are of the class of bull-heads—that simply know how to rush and butt, and the moment they encounter a wall, they slink off with their tails down. This is their case now. To give us a scare, and under cover of it, rush to the assault, is all that they know how to do. They are like the tiger—disappointed in the first spring, they steal back into the jungle."

"As the case stands, they may fire at us all day."

"They will hardly do that, sir! Like the tiger again, they will wait for night, and then comes our danger! While we have the light to see, they will hardly dare to expose themselves in assault; but, with the darkness, we can do nothing but watch at all the ports, and be prepared as well as we can for the close encounter."

"Surely, Willie, we have nothing then to fear. We can certainly with our force overcome them."

"Ay, sir, butcher them! as by God's help we will!" muttered the other fiercely. "But we must still lose in such a conflict. To conquer these wretches is a very small source of satisfaction; but to know that one life, precious to our hearts, has been sacrificed in doing so, is very terrible."

"It is, Willie; it is;—where are the girls now?"

"Up-stairs, sir, in safety!"

"Willie, my son, I should die of a broken heart—it would kill me, Willie, if one of these dear children suffered at the hands of these outlaws!"

"Need I tell you, father, that my head must be low—my eyes shut—my arm paralyzed—before harm shall come to them! Were it not better, sir, that I should help you up-stairs, sir, where you can have them under your own eye?"

"What, Willie Sinclair, would you have me leave my post?"

"We have enough here, sir;—and—your foot!"

"D—n the foot, sir! What is the pain of the foot when the soul is in agony? No, sir; no, Willie; *here* I stick, at my post, ready for the enemy. I see what you fear, Willie; but I do not fear. You think me unequal to the struggle. But you shall see that a man with a brave spirit, is not less a man because he has a crippled limb!"

Willie Sinclair laughed—laughed merrily.

"You are right, sir, right. Only so use your pistols, as to keep the rogues from your toes."

Some popping shots were now heard. Then a pause, and after a little interval a volley. The glass was again shattered—this time directly above the head of the veteran—and the fragments tumbled about his ears in all directions. Had Willie not drawn him away from the window-jambs, he would have been peppered with small shot.

"Swan-shot as I live," said the major, gathering the bits of lead about the floor. "This was delivered from the garden. What can Benny be about? He could surely have touched the rascal in that quarter."

Just then a single shot was heard.

"Ah! there, the old fellow speaks! Well, sir, we must only wait our time. We may have the close hug at nightfall."

And the major hurried away to his several parties, above and

below, to see that they were watchful. There was a lull in the storm of nearly half an hour. The suspense became very irksome to all parties. They could see no enemy—dared not venture to look out—and had no knowledge of what had been done. Suddenly, in the deepest hush, the faint sounds of a bugle were heard.

“Ah!” cried Willie, “he comes at last. We shall now have a dash at these rascals.”

“Who comes, Willie?”

“Peyre St. Julien, at the head of as brave a captain’s command of troopers as ever drew broadsword.”

“St. Julien, ha! I would it had been anybody else!” growled the veteran.

“And why, sir? St. Julien is as noble a fellow as ever crossed charger in battle.”

“Ay, sir, but he is a rebel to his king!”

“Why, so am I, sir!”

“True, and the greater my sorrow, Willie; but I do not relish these Frenchmen.”

“Why, Lord bless you, sir, he’s no more Frenchman than I am!”

“He’s the son of a Frenchman, sir, and he has an eye on your sister Carrie; and I prefer that my daughter should not marry any but a man of British stock.”

In the impulse of the moment, the father had betrayed himself, so as to reveal the true secret of the cold treatment which St. Julien had always received at his hands. It was only by reserve and coldness that he could repel the approaches of the young man, who was not only of the best blood, but the best character of the country. Willie Sinclair was about to answer with some sharpness, for he was the sworn brother of St. Julien, but a moment’s reflection satisfied him that he should rather hurt than help his friend’s cause, by entering into any argument, or making any reply. The bugle again sounded, and he disappeared in silence from the apartment. Hurrying up stairs, he encountered Carrie Sinclair in the passage. She too had heard the bugle, and her cheek was flushed, and she now trembled, as she never for an instant had done during the whole leaguer of the outlaws. Willie kissed her cheek, and putting

his arm about her waist, drew her to a window overlooking the entrance by the avenue. At that moment, the whole train of horsemen were wheeling into the enclosure, a gay and gallant troop, their swords flashing in the evening sunlight, and the bugler, at intervals, merrily timing their advance. At their head rode a tall and noble captain, whose white plume floated loftily above his helmet—a single feather of the heron—and whose flashing sword was waved in the direction of the dwelling.

“Strange!” said Willie; “I wonder who leads, Carrie. It is not St. Julien.”

He mocked her, and she knew it; and burying her face for a moment in his bosom, she said:—

“It is, Willie! You can not deceive me!”

“Then he has grown stouter since I last saw him, and does not carry himself with half the grace of former times.”

“Fie! you tease! But I know you.”

And now the strains of the bugle were long and loud; and Willie Sinclair, rushing down stairs, threw open the door of the hall in season to welcome his companion-in-arms at the entrance. Carrie, meanwhile, full of tremors, remained waiting in her chamber. Little Lottie, not discouraged by her sister, had followed her brother down the stairs.

CHAPTER XX.

SCOURING THE WOODS.

BUT where, while these events were passing, was the fierce and brutal outlaw, Dick of Tophet? One would think that, in an affair which he had begun, the leaguer of the Barony, and in which he was so deeply interested, his presence would not be wanting, nor would he have been but for the necessity of the case, and because of the exercise of that degree of prudence, essential to his own progress, which the old soldier is seldom persuaded to forget.

We have seen by what arts and what endurance of torture he contrived to make his escape from his bonds. When he emerged from the passage-way of the basement, the coast was clear. Congaree Polly, who had been passing to and fro, was now up-stairs busy spreading the table-cloth and setting plates. He could hear the clatter of these below, as she severally laid them on the board. In the court nobody was to be seen but a little group of negroes, and they saw him as he moved away and shouted aloud, not in alarm, but with curiosity as at the sight of any stranger; but little negroes are for ever shouting and squalling, and neither master nor cook gives much heed to their clamors. Dick was more heedful and watched the urchins for awhile before moving—watched the whole court, and that with very dissatisfied expression. He could nowhere see his horse which he had fastened to a neighboring tree. Good Benny Bowlegs, old soldier that he was, had duly cared for the beast—governed by two reasons, first, the good feeling of sympathy which he always entertained for a stout, well-built dragoon horse, and next, as he was one of the trophies of war, a part of the *spolia opima*, which somehow usually occupies no small share of the regards of all old soldiers. Dick of Tophet naturally conjec-

tured that the beast was safely sheltered in the stables of the barony, and, no doubt, totally heedless of his master's condition, munching comfortably upon his corn and fodder. Dick groaned as he reflected upon his loss, but there was no present remedy.

"Let me only git clear out of this fix," he muttered to himself, "and I'll find the pay for him somehow out of this same harrystocratic Sinclair."

He wasted no long time in idle lamentations. The horse was gone, and if he desired to go also in safety, he must needs tramp quickly and on his own legs. He looked out east and west, north and south, shaped out his course in his mind, noted the cover at which he was to strike, and darted forth upon his progress. Again the little negroes yelled and shouted, and clapped their hands and pointed with all their fingers, and rolled about and threw up clouds of dust over their heads; but they failed to attract the attention of anybody whose policy it might be to arrest the flight of the outlaw—and he pushed forward accordingly, without giving them the slightest heed, but with the savage mental determination to knock half a score of them on the head should they happen to cross his path for a moment. He had snatched up a carving-knife from the pile which Congaree Polly had laid down on a table in the lower passage preparatory to laying them out for dinner, and thus armed, he was in the mood to do desperate things, whether with necessity or not.

His course lay along the wood that skirted the lower line of the avenue, but it required a progress of fully a hundred yards over the open court before he could reach this shelter. To strike a route directly below, would be to risk exposure to the negroes whom he now felt sure were traversing the edges of the forest, and along the fence which ran all along the lower line of the settlement. The circuit which he proposed to make was considerable, but it was the only one which promised him a retreat without interruption, and such a retreat was essential in his condition—sore, scorched, suffering, and with scarcely a weapon in his grasp.

Very painful was his progress. In the first moment of his excitement, after getting loose from his bonds, he did not feel

so greatly the torture that he had undergone, and which he had endured with a patient fortitude which would not have discredited the ancient martyrology. In a better cause and nobler career, it would have lifted the ruffian into heroism. But when he began to walk, and had fairly succeeded in obtaining the partial woodland cover along the avenue, his sufferings began to make themselves felt with no ordinary degree of acuteness. By this time, his back was one entire blister—his hands and wrists; his feet and ankles—all shared in the same sort of burning torment, and he writhed at every step over the hot sands, and shrunk from every ray of the direct sun. He realized in degree the pains of the march such as Milton's Satan was forced to take when first recovering from the terrible conflict which precipitated him from the celestial empire. He too walked—

"With uneasy steps
Over the burning marle, . . .
. . . "And the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides."

But still, like the fallen angel he endured and strode away, writhing the while, and groaning—nay sometimes swearing most blasphemously, like the evil one to whom his followers compared him. Still he went forward. A thousand times he felt like casting himself down upon the leaves and grass—this was after he had got into the woods—but then his courage revived—perhaps his fears—and, suffering scalding sensations at every step he plunged forward, slowly but certainly increasing the distance between himself and his late prison-house. He was unpursued—that was something; had it been otherwise, he would have given up the thought of flight, and, in his desperation, would have welcomed the deadliest struggle, only seeking to do as much mischief as he could and not in any way to defend himself. He gained finally the entrance of the avenue—looked up and down the highway to see that he was not pursued, then took the downward route, still in the thicket, but still close beside the public road, not yet venturing to penetrate the deeper thickets where he felt sure that his comrades harbored.

Thus moving, he had made a progress which was considerable

for one in his state of suffering, when he heard or fancied that he heard a distant shot. He stooped his ear to the ground and listened. Again he heard a shot—two, three, or more. But they seemed to be still below him, though greatly to the left, and he thought it not improbable that Sinclair and the two armed negroes had boldly penetrated the forests in pursuit of his comrades. To get certainly in the rear of both parties, it was required that he should still press directly downward, and not venture in more deeply until the sounds of alarm should certainly arise between himself and the Barony. With this policy, and stimulated by the intimations of strife to an eager desire to be at work in the fray himself, he flourished his carving-knife, set his teeth firmly, and hurried on as rapidly as his sufferings would admit. He had gone perhaps a quarter of a mile further, or more, when his ear caught other sounds which compelled a halt and counselled concealment.

“A troop of horse!” he muttered, with an oath. “Who can it be?”

He was at a loss to conjecture.

“Marion’s men’s tother side of the river. Inglehardt is up the country. Harden, they say, has gone south. Who, in the name of all the black devils, can it be? It may be some of the ‘Yahoos.’”

The Yahoos were another tory banditti; their name, with a strange taste, self-chosen; and not inappropriate, unless too innocently unmeaning.

But the doubt of Dick of Tophet did not interfere to retard his own action. He hurried into a close thicket, sufficiently far from the road to escape any glancing eye, yet near enough himself to distinguish the approaching troopers. They came on at a trot, and went by handsomely, a neat and trim array of forty-five dragoons.

“Marion’s men, by the powers! St. Julien’s squad. Now, ef I kaint draw off them fellows in season, won’t they catch it!”

Thus muttered the outlaw, as he gathered himself up, with many growls and groans, and once more resumed his upright position. He now struck diagonally across the wood, pushing directly for the heart of the thicket where he supposed his comrades to be, and whence the sound of the firearms had arisen.

But hardly had he gone fifty yards, when he encountered a horseman directly in his track. He threw himself behind a tree as the new-comer approached, and when the latter, who seemed to be in a brown study, drew nigh, the outlaw stretched out his arm suddenly and grasped the bridle of the steed.

"Hello! thar! Lord! who's that? Oh! Fire Dick, is that you?"

The horseman was no less a person than our old acquaintance, worthy Pete Blodgit. He had promptly adopted the counsels of Willie Sinclair, at their last interview, and had seized the first chance to withdraw from his connection with the outlaws, which he did, without beat of drum, at the moment when the band was preparing for the first assault upon the house. They had not noticed his departure; had they done so, it is probable that they would have prevented it; for, though they made no sort of calculations upon him, in respect to the fight, they knew how to use him in affairs which involved no necessity for heroism. Pete knew perfectly well, that, in mere wilfulness of power, they would have detained him, if once they suspected him of any intention to depart. He modestly kept his purpose secret, and stole off while they were pressing forward to their severally-assigned posts for the assault. He was taken all aback—confounded, by the way—by an encounter so totally unexpected with the outlaw, whom, all the while, he supposed to be safely boxed up in the basement or the attic of Sinclair's house. The ordinary terrors which this man's presence inspired in his mind, were duly increased by the sudden and unanticipated meeting with him, but still more by his fierce, wild, and ghastly aspect. His face seemed blotched and bloated, his eyes were bloodshot, and there was a wolfish fierceness in his expression that denoted a great increase of his usual savage ferocity of will.

"Lord ha' mercy! how you skear'd me."

The other grinned horribly as he said:—

"Git down, Pete."

"Git down, lieutenant! What must I get down for—what's you guine to do to me?"

"Git down! I ain't a guine to hurt you. I only wants the horse"

"But it's my horse, Dick."

"Never mind! I wants him."

"But you ain't a guine to take my critter?"

"Yes! I must hev' him, Pete. Git down."

"But, Dick, how kin I, when you knows I'm a lame man, and kain't git on, no how, without a critter. I kain't do eny much travelling a-foot."

"And who the h—I's more lame than me?" was the fierce answer of the other. "Don't you see I'm burnt and scalded and blistered up from head to foot, and all a-fighting your battles?"

"Not any battles of mine, Dick," replied the other. "'Twas your own battles all the time, and I wasn't to have eny of the good of it, I know."

"Well, it don't much matter eny how. Thar's not much good of it come to enybody, and ef I don't overhaul our fellows and bring 'em off at once, they won't make the smallest sort of mouthful for St. Julien's dragoons. So git down, Pete, and give me your horse."

"Well, but lieutenant—"

"Git down, I tell you."

"But how kin I give up my horse? I'm sure, lieutenant, ef you takes him I'll never see him again. Let me go home quiet, Dick."

"Look you, Blodgit, I kain't be a trifling with you one minute of waste of time. Why, to be sure, ef I takes him, you stand a mighty fair chance of never seeing him agin. But what of that. Do you think I cares what your loss may be, when the needcessity is to save them good fellows that's in danger now from St. Julien's troopers! Git down, I say."

"I kain't give up my critter, Dick—I kain't!" was the reply of Blodgit, with an unusual show of determination, for him, and he jerked the bridle of his beast as he spoke, and struck his heels into his flanks, and would have been off without further parley but for the firm grasp which the outlaw had laid upon the bridle.

"You white livered lizard!" roared the outlaw; "and while I'm a wasting time with your provocations and prevarications, them good fellows is a gitting themselves chopped up by the dragoons!"

The words were seconded by the most decided action. The

beast was reined back upon his haunches in the twinkling of an eye, and Pete Blodgit, pulled from his back with a gripe of iron, fell prone upon the earth, heavily as a bag of sand. For a moment the carving-knife of Devil Dick was flourished over his head.

“ Marcy, Dick ! hev’ marcy !

“ You mean-sperritted skunk, I’ve hafe a mind to sculp you where you lies : but I ain’t got time for it. But jist you wait for it, tell I gits back, and ef I don’t take off sculp and ears, it’s bekaise I’ve got religion as I goes. Give me your blasted horn ! Quick as lightning.”

The horn was delivered to the outlaw ; he wound it thrice, a lively strain of alarm, then mounted the beast—an effort that made him groan pitifully, as it seemed to renew all the agonies of the blazing fire at his back and ankles—but he was capable of the effort, though he groaned under it ; was soon in the saddle, and away—back at full speed over the ground which Blodgit had just before slowly overcome. At intervals, he wound his horn as he rode ; a signal meant to awaken the apprehensions of his associates, and draw them back in season for escape from the troopers of St. Julien. We need not say that, nowise encouraged by the promises held out to him, Blodgit resolved not to wait one moment for the outlaw’s return ; but, in some degree forgetting his own lameness, he gathered himself up as soon as the other had ridden off, and took his way down the wood with a degree of rapidity which would have been highly creditable to an ordinary man in the full possession of all his limbs and sinews.

Let us return to the Barony. We have seen that Sinclair received his friend St. Julien at the entrance of the mansion ; but he did not then suffer him to alight.

“ Don’t dismount, St. Julien. There’s work for us yet. Keep your saddle and put your men on the alert. Ho ! there ; my horse ! We have been beleaguered. Didn’t you hear the firing ?”

“ No ! The wind was from us. How beleaguered ? By whom ?”

“ I’ll tell you as we ride. Meanwhile, send down some twenty men through the avenue, to make a circuit of a mile below, and dash in upon yonder wood. The outlaws, some

half a dozen or more were there half an hour ago. They are well mounted, but we may overhaul them. We will take a short cut over the fences, and strike at them directly in front. My horse! my horse, there!"

"Our beasts are pretty well knocked up, Willie," was the answer.

"Oh! they will do—they will do! But whether knocked up or not, we must brush that wood before dark. We have had Hell-fire Dick and his gang upon us."

"Ha! I thought that scoundrel was in Inglehardt's troop, and up the country."

"No! no! and Inglehardt's troop is not up the country, I fancy—at least, I have pretty good intelligence that he himself is somewhere about Orangeburg. Have you had any adventure to-day?"

"Slashed to pieces a body of the Yahoos, some fourteen in number, near the mill, on the Four-Holes, only a few miles below 'Bram's Castle."

"Ha! but they had not found him out?"

"Not that we know; but they were coming out of the swamp when we surprised them."

"And where's 'Bram?"

"He will be here to-night with your luggage, under the charge of Corporal Grayson, with half a-dozen troopers."

"You got all the papers."

"All!"

There was some other conversation, until the horse of Sinclair was brought out, all properly caparisoned by Benny Bow-legs. That faithful fellow also appeared, soon after his master was mounted, astride the steed which had been taken from "Devil Dick." St. Julien looked at the negro doubtfully, but Sinclair said, "Let him ride with us. He knows the wood, and may be useful." The little squad, meanwhile, had been detached, according to Sinclair's orders, and had already passed through the avenue, into the main road, for the purpose of making a circuit and taking the outlaws in the rear. In a few moments more, the troop of St. Julien, under the two chiefs, were breaking through the fence behind the garden, and dashing freely into the woods in which the outlaws harbored.

The time allowed Dick of Tophet in warning his comrades of their danger would not have been adequate to the purpose, if they had not themselves taken the alarm, long before the arrival of St. Julien. He met them on the retreat, and a few moments sufficed for explanation."

"We draw'd off," said Sam Brydone, who, in the absence of Dick, had taken the command, "bekaise we seed there was no sort of use trying to do anything before night."

"And where's all your men. You got Zeke Rodgers, didn't you. I heerd his dogs."

"Yes, we got him, to his misfortin'. Thar's his dogs; but he aint fit for nothing better than dog's meat now. He got a hurt in the first rush we made to git behind the kitchen, and he aint so much as hollered since. Bill Toland, too, he came up with Zeke, and he's got more lead in his swallow than he could quite force down. Here's Jack, too, got scraped by a handful of buckshot, I'm a-thinking, but tain't much. It's jest barked him about the shoulders."

"And whar's Joe Best?"

"He's coming on behind—slow enough. He's got to walk his critter all the way, since he's pretty much doubled up with a load somewhere about his hips, and has to lie down pretty much on his horse. Ef he tries to trot or canter he falls into a faint."

"Then they'll take him, by thunder, and that's next to roping him, I'm thinking."

"'Twon't take much to finish him."

"Well, you kain't stop for him or anybody," cried Dick of Tophet. "Ef I know Willie Sinclair, he'll hev' that troop of St. Julien's scattered about these woods before you kin say Jack Robinson! We must put out as fast as any four legs can go it. We've got the heels of them, and can keep ahead of St. Julien, ef we choose, for though he did put his troop into a trot, when he got in sight of the Barony—jist, I suppose to show off—yet I could see there was no heart in the legs of any of his beasts to make 'em willing. We must ride now, ef we would be able to have a feeling for a hot supper anywhere to-night."

"But I promised to go slow for poor Joe Best."

"We kain't afford it, though he was a better man than Best,"

growled the savage Dick, with a sort of humor that spontaneously presents itself where a person's name is naturally so suggestive. "Joe must take his chance, and we must use ours. I tell you we've got nothing to spare. We must go at a gallop, ef we would make the river fur enough below, before night comes. The night and the river swamp is our hope just now. Joe must take his chainces. It's a part of the contract in a scrimmage."

Scoundrels are always selfish of necessity — since it is in selfishness that scoundrelism always has its birth; and the reluctance of the party to leave their wounded comrade was quickly overcome.

"But whar's Nelson?" demanded Brydone, looking round the party. No one could answer.

"He's missing!"

"That's a sufficient report just now. Ef he kaint find himself, he kaint blame us for not finding him. Spur up, boys — no stop for thinking."

"Are you wounded yourself, Dick? You rides as ef you was hurt."

"Ax my back? Look at it, and then drive the spur harder than ever, sence that ought to warn you what may happen to you all, ef you're taken."

"H-ll! you don't say they roasted you?" cried Brydone, as he saw the condition of the other's back at a glance.

"On rid-hot coals, bars of red iron, and a blazing fire at hands and feet! Won't I hev' my revenge for it all! Spur up, fellows. I mustn't be cotched jest yit. I've got to live long enough to roast every critter in that Sinclair Bairony — the cursed infernal harrystocrats!"

Let us leave them as they fly down the country at full speed, and obliquing in the direction of the Santee swamp. The pursuit was hotly commenced by Sinclair and St. Julien. They divided the squadron, and scattered themselves over the wood. Fast they rode, and far they rode — that is to say, as fast and as far as was consistent with a close search, and the jaded condition of their horses. The squad of St. Julien, after awhile, fell in with the wounded outlaw, Joe Best. As he heard their approach, he put the spurs to his horse in the hope to make off,

but the first plunge forward of the steed subjected him to so much agony, that he drew up and checked the beast as suddenly. The ruffian felt his danger—he knew his fate. He was well known to all the men of Marion, and he had been long since outlawed. He drew a pistol from his holsters, and prepared himself for the coming up of his pursuers. When they drew nigh, he fired, and the sword-arm of a common trooper fell powerless at his side, just as he was about to cut the ruffian down. But he could not escape. Half a-score of men were within call of the wounded man, and the report of the pistol brought them up, with St. Julien at their head. At this moment, whether because of his pains or his policy, Joe Best dropped from his horse. The animal was caught in a moment—horses being in even greater demand than men, among the southern partisans—and Best himself was secured in the twinkling of an eye. A couple of dragoons dismounted, and laid hands on him. He lifted the emptied pistol with a feeble arm, and his eyes glared savagely upon his assailants. It was evident that the loss of strength implied no loss of sense or intelligence.

“Who is he? Do you know him?” asked St. Julien.

“An old scamp,” was the reply—“no other than Joe Best, who burnt Mother Baldrick’s house, and carried off Holman’s horses.”

“Cloud!” called St. Julien—and as the trooper so called rode up, the captain said:—“search him, Cloud, and bring to me what he may have about him. You know what to do with him.”

And thus speaking, St. Julien rode away, followed by all but Cloud and another. These remained with the wounded outlaw. Cloud had dismounted. He now uncoiled a dozen yards of the rope from his saddle, and approached the wounded man.

“What are you guine to do?” demanded Best, “needn’t tie a wounded man like me. I’m your prisoner.”

“We don’t want prisoners,” was the reply. “Search him, Parler!”

The pockets of the outlaw were soon emptied, but they revealed little.

“Have you anything to say?” asked Cloud.

“To say! What should I say?” replied the outlaw, looking dubiously.

“I thought you might have some confession to make; but if you haven’t, better say your prayers, quickly.”

“My prayers! Why, do you mean to kill me without any trial?” The prisoner’s voice grew husky.

“You have been tried long ago, and condemned. Be quick. You’re to die now. If you have any prayers to say, the sooner you set about it the better.”

“You’re in airnest, air you?” demanded the outlaw.

“Yes! Have to be! Say your prayers.”

“I kaint, and I wont! Ef I’m to hang, why I kaint help it. Do your d—dest!”

In five minutes after, the miserable wretch was convulsively shivering from a swinging limb of the forest, and Cloud and his companion were riding briskly off to join their comrades.

CHAPTER XXI.

A DASH OF SENTIMENT AS PREPARATIVE FOR SUPPER.

THE farther pursuit of the outlaws was unsuccessful. Night had fallen, however, ere the bugles of St. Julien recalled the pursuing party. The search had sufficed, at all events, to expel the robbers from the immediate neighborhood: and this was all that could be done under the circumstances. Had the troop of St. Julien not been utterly fagged out by a long day's hard riding, they would probably have destroyed the whole of the banditti. They were all well mounted, on fleet horses; and in this particular arm of the service the Americans had greatly the advantage of the British. There was no finer cavalry in the world than that of the partisans. Their preponderating strength, in this respect, was the secret of all their successes.

It was at the bottom of the garden of the Barony, that the officers held their rendezvous, and that the several reports of their lieutenants were made. Here they found the bodies of two of the outlaws who had been slain, one by the pistol of Benny Bowlegs behind the kitchen, the other by Willie Sinclair's buckshot, from the dwelling. The two victims were Zeke Rodgers and Bill Toland. They were both quite dead when the troopers came up, and were hastily buried by the negroes, in the neighboring woods. The robbers had thus lost three of their gang slain outright—no small assessment upon their small capital of strength. Besides the scorplings, self-bestowed, of Dick of Tophet, Jack Halliday had been sorely wounded, and Ben Nelson was still missing. Whether wounded or not, he had escaped the search of the dragoons.

"We can do nothing more to-night, Peyre," said the major, "and the rest of these rascals will be beyond pursuit by morn-

ing. At all events, they have had a taste of trouble which will make them somewhat more cautious. Let us now go to the house, and see after some supper. I suppose your fellows have an appetite."

"Are all well, Sinclair?"

"All but my father; and his gout leaves him never wholly well. The excitement of this affair has rather helped him. He actually took post with sword and pistol at one of the entrances, with all the eagerness of a young soldier on his first campaign."

"I take for granted, Sinclair, that his love for me has not undergone any great increase."

"No, Peyre," answered the other, with a laugh—"he still holds both of us as rebels to his sovereign. This one objection waived, and, I fancy, there is no other more serious offence in either of us. And, for our objects, we must wait events, and bear ourselves patiently. You may find him querulous and cold, Peyre, but for my sake, do not notice anything of the sort. He is old, remember, a bigoted loyalist, and—"

"Nay, Sinclair, it needs not! I am quite well aware of what is due to him, by way of allowance; and for *her* sake, if not yours and my own, I shall be even submissive. You know I am very meek of temper."

"Of manner, at all events, Peyre, and that is all that is needed in this case. But give your orders. Let your men bivouac along the avenue, or, if you please, on the edge of the wood."

We need not note the disposition of the troop, but will accompany the two officers to the dwelling. Here they found every room alight. The parlor was ready for the reception of company, and the servants were busy in spreading a double table in the supper-room. Colonel Sinclair had had himself wheeled into the parlor, and sat in state fronting the entrance, with his favorite leg resting upon a cushioned stool. Lottie was playing in the piazza, and eagerly looking out for the approach of the dragoons, their returning bugles having been heard some time before. Carrie, meanwhile, was in her chamber, making certain preparations which showed her not more unmindful than any other of her sex, in respect to the appearance which she should make before her guests, one of whom, we are to remem-

ber, was her lover. Though one of the least affected, least coquettish, least vain, of all the damsels of our acquaintance—and at no time very solicitous about personal display—yet, on this occasion, Carry was somewhat hard to please in the adjustment of her toilet. When she did appear, it was in very simple fashion, it is true: in a light robe of blue, suitable for midsummer, her hair arranged, as was then the style, in tresses terminating in ringlets on her shoulder, and a single white flower resting upon her bosom. She was very lovely in this simple habit, which suited her style of beauty exactly—a fair, well-formed Saxon face, with soft brown hair, a complexion of brilliant white and red, large, deep blue eyes, and an eager buoyant expression of countenance showing a frank nature, and a generous, impulsive soul.

The old man was impatient of her delay. He conjectured what engaged her in her chamber so long, and was divided in his humors in respect to her supposed employment. No one had more pride in his daughter than Colonel Sinclair—no one could more have desired that she should appear to advantage—and had the expected guests been Lord Rawdon and his suite, the imperious baron would have insisted upon all proper feminine preparations. But he was not so well pleased to think that all her painstaking was to be wasted on the eyes of a rebel-captain and his troop—that captain being, as he phrased it, the son of one of “those frog-eating Frenchmen of Craven county!” Knowing that St. Julien had a penchant for his daughter—for there is a past history of their intimacy which we must leave our readers to gather from the context—and half-fearing and suspecting that Carrie rather favored than discouraged the addresses of the young man, and that Willie Sinclair had been his fast friend always, any preparation of his daughter, for the reception of the unwelcome guest, would have been thought too great an expenditure of consideration upon him. Not that old Sinclair knew anything unfavorable of Peyre St. Julien. On the contrary, he had every reason to believe that he was a man of honor, as he was known to be a gentleman. But he was a rebel; and that was a sufficient reason at a moment, certainly, when rebellion was supposed not to be a thriving enterprise; and the old man entertained, besides, a hearty old English

prejudice, then not uncommon in this country, against all of Gallic origin. Willie Sinclair had more than once battled this prejudice in behalf of his friend; but not, indeed, with any reference to the desires of the latter for the hand of his sister. He well knew that the time was not yet come for the discussion of this object, and that nothing certainly could be effected in behalf of his friend's suit while the event of the war was doubtful.

"But," as he said to St. Julien, "as marriage just now would be totally out of the question, there is no need that we should be precipitate. We must both wait, Peyre, for a calmer season. War leaves no opportunity, and but little time for love!"

And, to this suggestion, Peyre St. Julien assented. He was a lover, and a fond one; but he was one of those men whose resolves are only strengthened by delay; whom opposition only arms with determination, and who never suffer themselves to lose a game, by the precipitate desire for its profits. Besides, he had his securities, and in these lay a certain amount of consolation. Carrie Sinclair's eyes had answered to his own sufficiently; and he knew enough of her nature to know that she was as firm and tenacious of character, as she was frank and generous of soul. His confidence in her faith, though declared only by her eyes, left him in no apprehension of any capricious change in her sympathies.

At length, the troop filing into the avenue made their appearance.

"Here they come, papa! Here they come!" cried Lottie. "Look what handsome horses! See how they ride! And here comes Bubber Willie and Captain Peyre!"

And the little girl danced and clapped her hands, and ran to and fro, between parlor and piazza, until the two officers were seen ascending the steps. Then she darted out, and soon shared in the caresses of both alternately, St. Julien bringing her into the parlor on his shoulder. He set her down gently with a kiss, approached the colonel, and, bowing respectfully, he offered him his hand in silence.

The other took it civilly, not cordially, as he said:—

"Glad to see you, sir; glad to see you. You came seasonably to our relief; many thanks, sir, many thanks; though, I

fancy, these rascals of banditti had already received a sufficient dressing at our hands to make them sheer off. In fact they were gone—in full retreat, sir—before you made your appearance.”

“They had certainly no motive to remain, sir,” was the quiet and gentlemanly reply of St. Julien.

“Ay,” cried Willie Sinclair, “they got more than they came for; two men slain outright, and others no doubt wounded, they paid heavily for their enterprise. But their very losses were calculated to stimulate their ferocity. What I dreaded was the approach of night, when they could have made a rush upon us from all the points of the compass at the same moment, and when our fire could have had but little effect in preventing their approach.”

“But what had we to fear from a hand-to-hand contest, with fifty negroes in the house?”

“Oh! I do not doubt, sir, that we should have beaten the rascals off—butchered them all, perhaps—nay, I’m pretty sure we should have done so—but I confess that the mere victory over such rascallions, at the expense of any precious lives—nay, at the cost of one poor negro in the conflict—held forth but little temptation in my eyes. I rejoice that the coming of St. Julien has given us security against this danger.”

“So it has!” exclaimed Colonel Sinclair—his sense of justice prevailing—“so it has, Mr. St. Julien”—he could not bring himself to accord the military title to a rebel captain—“and I thank you, sir, for your presence. I am glad to see you here, sir.”

This was said rather stiffly; but it was honestly said. Our baron was a man of prejudices, but, give him breathing-time, and his conscientiousness always prevailed over his prejudices.

At this moment Carrie Sinclair appeared. The guest rose to meet her. Their hands met. In those days, the lady of the house always gave her hand to the visiter when he was of the same rank. In all other cases she simply bowed, and in such a way as to discourage any closer approach. The case is somewhat altered now, and the discrimination between the two classes, though still, in most respects, observed in the cities, is apt to be overlooked in the country. We are sorry for it. The distinction is a proper one, where ladies are concerned. The

failure to observe it, is apt to encourage the inferior to aspirations which end only in his mortification.

Colonel Sinclair's eye watched the meeting of the parties with some interest. But he saw nothing to offend him. The manner of St. Julien was calm and respectful—nay, seemingly cold. That of Carrie was easy, self-possessed, and quiet, and she seated herself near her brother. One word in respect to the personal appearance of St. Julien. He was of middle size for our country—some five feet eight inches high, well made, but slender, of good muscle, of lithe frame, and vigorous muscle. His face was pale, his eye black, large, and vigilant, his hair of the same color, worn long, probably as much because of the want of a barber, as his own taste. It hung down upon his back, and was soft and fine; his nose was aquiline, his mouth well formed, and showing very white teeth. His brow was lofty and full, the eyebrows black and thick. His air was that of a well-bred gentleman, very quiet, simple, and unobtrusive. In a word, he was one of those happy temperaments *whom you never take by surprise*. Yet he was a man of warm feelings, and even violent passions.

“You have ridden far to-day, Mr. St. Julien.”

“Some forty-four miles, sir; but our troop would not have so much felt the ride, had it not been for a little brush with a body of Yahoos, near the Four-Holes.”

“I hope you demolished those wretches utterly.”

“We did something toward it, sir.”

There was a pause. At length the veteran resumed:—

“I do not know what the peaceable inhabitants of the country are to do, with these squads of banditti roaming about the forests. Nobody is secure. Their object is plunder only. This wretched rebellion has deprived us of all our securities.”

This was an ungenerous speech, considering who were his guests. It was, however, by no means a *deliberate* offence, on the part of our loyalist baron. It was simply his ordinary reflection. A slight smile on the lips of St. Julien, found its interpretation from the tongue of Willie Sinclair, who said quickly:—

“It so happens, father, that all these rascals, Scophilites, Yahoos, foragers, tories, by whatever name they may be called,

are all in the king's commission. They all claim, with yourself, to be busy in the work of putting down rebellion."

"Well, sir, does it make anything against the authority that the agent should abuse the trust?"

"Yes, sir, when the authority knows perfectly the sort of agent which it chooses. The Scophilites and Yahoos, sir, were notorious long before the beginning of this war."

"Well, sir, even allowing this to be quite true, yet, in a rebellion such as this, which finds a whole people ungrateful, I hold that the king has a perfect right to subsidize any agent."

"If I concede what you claim, my dear father—which I do not—it necessarily follows that nobody has a right to complain that the rascal, endowed with a trust, continues to be a rascal, in spite of the king's commission. You, in particular, who profess to believe that George of England can do no wrong, must quiet all those murmurs which resent the civilities of George's agents."

"Sir, I will be obliged to you if you will speak in more respectful language of our king."

"No king of mine, sir;—but I am willing to defer to your wishes. I wish to speak of him as little as possible, and would you suffer it, sir, should gladly forbear this class of subjects. I find it more pleasant to think of the good cheer I had to-day. What had you for dinner to-day, St Julien?"

"Hope of supper to-night, major."

"What! no dinner, Mr. St. Julien?" cried the old man. "Carrie, do see that supper is not a moment delayed. Sir, you shall have supper, with as hearty a welcome as if you were not a rebel."

"My stomach is a loyal one, at least, colonel," was the quiet reply of St. Julien. Carrie Sinclair had disappeared.

Not to talk of the war was scarcely possible. There was no other topic. The necessity of running into it was unavoidable, and, with the best intention of forbearance in the world, our baron soon after found himself talking of Lord Rawdon and Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

"Have you met with Lord Edward, Mr. St. Julien?" he asked of his guest.

"I have not had that honor, colonel?"

"You will be delighted with him. He is a fine looking fellow, darkly handsome, with fine eyes, and a peculiar mouth. He is as noble as handsome, sir; a very noble fellow; all ardor and impulse, and capable of the very highest heroism. I should be sorry that you should meet as enemies, Mr. St. Julien—"

"And why, sir?" demanded Willie Sinclair, with some little pique. "I, for one, as the friend of Peyre St. Julien would have no dread of the result in an encounter."

This speech taught the veteran the doubtful character of his own remark.

"Oh! Mr. St. Julien, I did not mean that; I have no doubt you would do your duty, sir; and I am far from venturing an opinion as to the result of a conflict between you."

"I take that for granted, Col. Sinclair."

"Sir, you only do me justice. But I will say no more. It seems impossible to escape a blunder, the moment we happen to speak of any of the parties in this accursed war. Sir, will you not agree with me to damn this war? I say, sir—damn this war! This most abominable, unnatural war, which will not suffer a gentleman to declare his honest natural sentiments. Sir—Mr. Julien, be pleased to say damn this war."

"With great pleasure, Col. Sinclair—damn this war!"

"And I echo the sentiment," cried Willie,—"D—n this war!—let me add, sir, an amendment—" to his father,—"and d—n the inventors of it!"

"And who do you call the inventors of it, sir?" demanded the old man sharply.

"Ah! sir? into that question we need not inquire. You will have one notion, I another. It matters not, sir, who is right,—the war being unnatural and abominable, I ask of you to say—d—n the inventors of it!"

"Well, sir, I do, believing them to be your infernal Congress. and——"

"No more, sir, you have already said a syllable or two too much. You old gentlemen presume a little upon your years to be a-talking, sir; you know not when to stop. I will not imitate you, since my purpose is not to provoke an interminable dispute. The moment that gentlemen learn the fact that opinions among the party are diametrically opposite on one subject, they

have but one rule, and that is to refrain, unless their object is to provoke a quarrel. Now sir, your object is not to provoke a quarrel, since I am your son, and can not fight you, and Capt. St. Julien being your guest, you can not fight him. We must accordingly steer clear of politics, and, by the way, sir, talking of Sir Edward Fitzgerald, did he tell you, sir, that he is engaged to be married to a Miss Sandford, a lady of great beauty and wit, with whom he so flirted, just before coming to America, at the castle of Lord Shannon, that, the story goes in Charleston, she is about to follow him to this country!"

The colonel raised his eyebrows in consternation.

"Engaged! Impossible! How should you know what is the talk in Charleston."

"I ought to know. I have been in that goodly city within the last few days!"

"Ha! there is treachery at work then! Say, sir, by whom were you sheltered there, and what was your object?"

"My object is briefly told. I wished to select house and grounds for my summer residence, after the evacuation, and they can be procured at small cost when that event occurs. I wished to put my agent on the alert, so that I may not lose the season. As to the person who sheltered me, I have only to say it was a fair lady; gallantry can concede no more, and courtesy will not ask so much. In regard to the treachery, sir, do you not see that any talk on this hand will bring us back to the forbidden subject. In your loyalty, sir, you must not lose sight of what is due to the gentleman."

"Did you ever hear such an impertinent son, Mr. St. Julien? But he is right, after a fashion of his own. I am too old a subject of the king, Mr. St. Julien, not to forget, in my zeal, sometimes, what is due to the company. Pray pardon it. In respect to Lord Edward Fitzgerald, my son, I don't believe a word of your report. I fancy it is a fabrication of your own, and that you have not been in Charleston."

"Ay, but I have, sir."

"Why, sir, do you not know that you incur the peril of the gallows."

"I am not alone, sir; the thing is frequent."

"You are bold, sir. But of this report of Lord Edward."

"It *is* the report. The fact is, sir, that the good ladies of Charleston speak of Lord Edward as something of a flirt—a young cavalier of very flexible affections—who finds a new flame wherever he goes."

"What a slander! The young man, when here, seemed rather demure than otherwise. I confess he was very attentive to Carrie, but without any seeming purpose of display. He was—"

"My dear father, in love, and fashion, and gallantry, and display, everything has undergone a change since your time.—"

At this moment Carrie re-entered the room. Her appearance probably suggested to the major of dragoons a portion of what he should say.

"Then," he continued, "if you happened to be in attendance upon a fair damsel, and a musical instrument of any sort happened to be at hand, you were expected to solicit her to play; it was one part of the code of courtesy that you should escort her to the instrument, her finger-tips in yours, you bowing half to the ground, she smiling to the skies all the way as you went; and when you seated her you bowed again to the ground, your disengaged hand upon your enthralled heart, and she still smiling as graciously as if acknowledging the last of mortal favors. Then, as she played and sang, you stood behind or beside her chair, and fell, or rose into raptures at every stave, until at the close you cried—'Oh! what divine enchanting ravishments!'" and, with a deep-drawn sigh, such as an air-pump might utter as it sucks away the last breath from an exhausted receiver, you again took the lady's tips between yours, and with mutual smiles and bows escorted her back to her former place."

"Puppy! you don't mean to say that *I* ever practised any of this ridiculous sort of behavior?"

"No doubt of it, sir, when your joints were a trifle more flexible than now. But such was the behavior, and, absurdly tender and impressive as it was, it never, in those days, was held to bind either of the parties thus playing the fool, in any mortal or spiritual engagements. But the case is altered now, and even you, sir,—" to the father—"even you, sir, are evidently disposed to subscribe to the prevailing notion that when a block-head behaves after this fashion, there's something in it."

"How, sir,—what mean you—I believe in such nonsense?"

"But it is evident you do, sir, whatever you may think; for look you, here come my Lord Rawdon and my Lord Edward Fitzgerald; and the younger of these two scapegrace Irish lords, plays courtier to my sister Carrie, and by her finger tips he conducts her to the harpsichord, and she sings for him and plays for him, and he stands over her all the while looking his raptures up at the ceiling, and thrusting his hands into his hair, and sighing sentimentally, and imploring in subdued tones for "one more divine song from those divine lips,"—playing the foppish sentimentalist as the young foplings of the time of Charles the Second used to do, your Sedleys and Rochesters and Ethereges, Savilles, and Lovells; and you jump headlong to the conclusion that all this is love—that our poor rustic sister has made a conquest of a lord, and all that sort of thing, and your dream now is of ennobling the family—having a lord in it, and probably seeing before you die——"

The baron silenced him with a roar.

"Zounds, sir, do you hold me to be a fool!"

"By no means, sir, but the wisest man is hardly wise when his peculiar weakness is assailed. Now, you are a born aristocrat, and both of these Irish lords see the way to your sympathies. They have flattered you by attentions which you suppose to be peculiar, and what would be a commonplace civility in a court, you find to be a special committal in a wild country like ours. And you are filling my poor little sister's head with all sorts of notions of conquest, until she too begins to think of foreign conquest, and of stars and garters, and of a presentation at court, and heaven knows what besides, in the shape of high society, state, and grand establishments, among the British nobility."

"Now, Mr. St. Julien," exclaimed the old man, stifling his anger, and striving to respond in the same quizzical humor with his son—"would not anybody suppose from this puppy's nonsense, so seriously stated, that there was some truth in all this statement; that I had really been playing the fool with these Irish lords, and that my head was really turned with their attentions? And all his invention comes from the simple statement which I made him, that they had been here, and spent a

night with me. As for my daughter, sir, I see no reason why she should be flattered by any man's attentions, or any lord's. She is worthy, sir—to my notion—of any, the noblest person in the three kingdoms; and it is a mere scandal to speak of her, as being delighted with the favor of my Lord Edward. In truth, sir, she was hardly polite to him. Yet he was attentive—very attentive—though by no means guilty of any such foppish excruciations as that young puppy would insinuate.”

Here Carrie herself interrupted playfully.

“Now, papa, don't pretend to lessen the merits of the conquest I had made. I protest against both your account and Willie's; and do complain of the disposition which you both show, to deprive me of the secret satisfaction which I feel in the visit of these noble lords. You, my father, are of the opinion that my Lord Rawdon came here on political accounts, to obtain your counsels in respect to the war and the country; and you took good care to inform him of all he wished to learn, and, I fancy, a great deal more; you, Willie, have a notion that, knowing British power to be declining everywhere in Carolina, my lord only came hither to prevent by conciliation the defection from the good cause of so strong a supporter of royal government. You are both decidedly wrong. He came hither for no other purpose than to introduce my Lord Edward Fitzgerald. He had heard of me in Ireland; he had exchanged from the East India army into the 19th regiment, as soon as he found that its destination was Carolina; and no sooner does he arrive, than he volunteers as an aid to my Lord Rawdon, and persuades his lordship to visit the Barony, simply to get a sight of myself, and when he did get a sight of me, and heard me play and sing, it was all over with him. I protest that he was in raptures, and that Willie's picture, though something of a caricature, was yet so very like the truth, that, in simple honesty, I am compelled to recognise the portrait. There, gentlemen, you have my version of this true history. It is such as a young damsel alone could furnish,—who sees more deeply into the true motives of Irish lords than anybody else. You see how everything hangs together in nicely-adjusted connection; how the parts fit; the cause and the effect equally discernible. You see how earnest was the aim of my Lord Edward; with what love-

like tenacity he pursued it; at what sacrifice of comfort; at what risk of life; and you see the result;—he has come—he has seen, and I have conquered. Pray now, if you are gentlemen, do not strive to lessen the merits of my conquest, or make me doubtful of my lover. But, from sentiment to supper; I see the servant beckons us.”

And she rose gracefully as she spoke, and took the arm of her brother.

“What a conceited baggage!” exclaimed the veteran. “But”—shaking his head more seriously, he added—“she is half right. I do believe my Lord Edward has lost his heart!”

Willie laughed merrily, and a slight smile dawned upon the small and well-cut mouth of St. Julien. Little Peter, at this moment appeared, to wheel the colonel into the supper-room; and the scene changed in a few seconds to the latter apartment.

CHAPTER XXII.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAMING.

IN the good old times—and we are too apt to suppose that all old times were good in comparison with our own present;—an absurd notion, natural to all persons who are beginning to get old themselves;—in the good old times, supper was a repast of great significance, and not a little state with all who claimed to derive from an English original. Our baron did not abridge in any degree the solemn importance of the meal. But we are not disposed to catalogue on the present occasion the good things on table. Our novelists, following Walter Scott, have indulged in such details *ad nauseam*; and in reporting the attractive varieties of viands, which provoked the appetites of their *dramatis personæ*, they have too frequently taken away all the appetites of their readers. There is, in all the Bull family, a great desire to see a well-spread table. It would seem that cold baked meats could even be a source of warm delight to mere spectators of the feast; and charity dinners will still be honored with the presence of numbers, who scan eagerly the performances of voracious urchins whom they feed from the hands of benevolence. Whether it is that they delight to see how well hunger can feed, or that their pleasure arises from the unwonted display of plum-pudding charities—a feast one day in the year, in marvellous contrast to the famine of the other three hundred and sixty-four days—is a question which the ascetic philosopher may decide for himself, the point is one which shall not interfere with our story. For a like reason, we shall content ourselves with saying simply that the supper table at the Sinclair Barony, on the present occasion, was, as usual, amply spread, and with a sufficient variety to pacify the hunger of any dragoon officer in any service—a class of the military in respect to whom the appetite is said always to be of proverbial ex-

cellence. There were meats cold and warm, breadstuffs of wheat, rice, and corn; toasts and cakes; and—luxuries rarely beheld by American eyes at this period—hot cups of tea and coffee, sent out their aromatic sweets at every plate upon the board. The young lieutenants, Cordes, Mazyek, and Postell, were invited to be sharers in the feast; while, under Willie Sinclair's directions, the whole body of dragoons were provided with a smoking supper at their *bivouac* in the great avenue.

Carrie Sinclair presided as hostess; her brother officiating in the place of the baron, whose game leg required cushions, and a table to himself. But he sate close at hand, and mingled cheerfully in the conversation and the feast, as became the proprietor. And the gentlemen feasted with a due sense of the merits of the viands; and Carrie was kept busy in the lady-like employment—which a true lady can make so graceful—of adjusting the degree of cream and sugar to those cups, “which not inebriate,” but cheer. And, excepting the clatter of plates, knives and forks, there was silence round the table “for a time.”

But the first vigorous workings of appetite over, the chat began; and soon the great silver tray, with its finely cut crystal, was set on the table, six goodly bottles, each with some choice French or Spanish *liqueur*. This constituted, in those good old times, a necessary feature of a planter's supper-table, as essential as the tea and coffee; and sometimes the lady condescended to sip of the celestial blue, or red, or amber drops, at the entreaty of the gentlemen—i. e., be it remembered, when it could no longer be disguised from a scandalous, and prying world, that the aforesaid lady had fairly reached that certain age, about which there can be no certainty. We suppose it hardly necessary to say that Carrie Sinclair was still in profound ignorance of the peculiar virtues of any of the said *liqueurs*. Her father, however, had the tray handed him, and filling one of those tiny glasses, which were specially appropriated to these fine cordials, he sent the tray round to the several guests.

“Gentlemen,” said he, “do me honor in a glass of cordial—I am happy to see you here.”

They drank. A bugle sounded from without, and the young lieutenants rose, and with courtly bows, took their leave, with

looks that would have lingered still. But the duty was a strict one. St. Julien alone remained with the colonel, Willie Sinclair, and Carrie; and a pleasant but casual conversation followed, which our space will not suffer us to put on record. In this conversation St. Julien mingled sparingly; but what he said, was, as usual, marked by a quiet grace, good sense, and propriety, which insensibly had its effect upon the veteran. At length Carrie rose and left the room for the parlor. St. Julien kept his seat for a while, then followed her. Seeing this, his old twinge of jealousy returned, like a twinge of the gout to the foot, and troubled the soul of the veteran. He hallooed for Little Peter to wheel him into the parlor also, but Willie Sinclair arrested the movement.

"Not yet, my dear father, if you please. I must have some serious talk with you, and this is probably the only chance we have, for you will soon retire, and I shall have to leave the Barony before you are awake in the morning."

"Why so soon, Willie."

"I have a great deal to do to-morrow, sir, and shall have to ride fast for the next three days, to accomplish the various tasks assigned me."

"This reminds me, Willie, that I have a subject of very serious talk with you. Why, sir, are you in this ungentlemanly disguise. If you have a military command, why reject the uniform, which, whether I approve the cause or not, is on the face of it significant of an honorable military service. In this disguise, my son, you endanger life and honor equally. It increases tenfold the horror and anxiety which I feel in consequence of your present connection. I now tremble—not, sir, that you may be slain in battle—for this is not necessarily a dishonoring fate, though you perish in an improper cause—but with the dread, sir, that a son of mine may be destined to a felon's death."

"The risks of war are always various, as they are always serious, my father. In the performance of important duties, such as the heart as well as head acknowledges, we are not suffered to pick and choose between them. You are right in supposing that I incur some extra risks in addition to those of mere battle; but the end which I aim at is of such vital impor-

tance to our cause, that I am compelled to shut my eyes to its superior perils. Of course, I can not tell you what these duties are. I trust, however, that this week will end the peculiar service in which I am now engaged, and I shall then resume my command in the fields of open warfare. Let this suffice; a single week or two will be sufficient for my purposes."

"But in that week or two, Willie—in that short period of time—what may not happen! Oh! Willie, my son, greatly as you have vexed and disappointed me in the course you have thought proper to pursue, I will forgive you all, if you will only cast off these mean disguises, and appear in your proper character. Now that I see your present employment, the horrible picture of the cord and scaffold are ever before my eyes. Remember André!"

The son was touched at the sudden show of feeling in the old man. His eyes filled. He took his father's hand.

"Believe me, sir, no one more bitterly regrets than myself that any act of mine should give you pain, or startle you with a moment's apprehension. I trust, sir, that I feel I would gladly die to make you happy. But my opinions and sentiments involve a duty of performance, and one duty has inevitably grown out of another. It will end soon—this, the most painful and perilous part of it—and you shall then be relieved from all farther anxiety on this score."

"You have passed without a flag, within the British posts, Willie—you meditate doing so again."

"I can tell you nothing, sir, upon the subject. It is only proper that you should know nothing—not because it would harm our cause, but as it would make your relations somewhat awkward in any future meeting with the officers of the British army."

"Oh! do not heed me in this matter."

"I must heed everything, equally on your account, my own, and that of the service in which I am engaged. Let us now talk of a subject which more immediately concerns yourself and my sisters."

"What do you mean, Willie?"

"You will all have to leave the Barony, sir, and the sooner you do so the better. This region will shortly become the ac-

tive scene of war. Here will be the shock of the contending armies. The whole country between the Santee and the Edisto will constitute but one vast theatre of action, more or less employed, and for a period more or less prolonged; and every spot of this precinct will be traversed alternately by conflicting armies. They will rock to and fro over the country, and the bloodiest trials of strength may take place at your very door. Of course, all will be confusion, insecurity, and absolute danger. Neither party will be able to afford protection against the lawless bands that hover along the track of armies, and snatch at spoil whenever it offers. You can not desire to linger in such a region, under such circumstances; and my counsel is that you remove, within a week if possible, across the Santee, and take up your abode with Aunt Malcolm."

For a moment the old man was confounded. When he recovered himself, he said:—

"And, pray, from what reasons do you gather the prospect of war in this neighborhood?"

"It is almost inevitable. Here the British general will be required to make his last stand."

"Pshaw! the old story! Do you hope to make me believe any such nonsense, when I know that my Lord Rawdon has relieved Ninety-Six, and has driven your blacksmith commander out of the country."

"He did not drive him far, sir, and the game is reversed. Lord Rawdon is even now in full retreat."

"Impossible, sir! Impossible!"

"But true, nevertheless. Ninety-Six is abandoned; and in proof of the acknowledged incapacity of the British forces to hold the country, the loyalists of Ninety-Six district are now on the march; men, women, children, goods, and chattels, under Cruger's escort, seeking a last refuge within the walls of Charleston."

"Not a word of this will I believe."

"On my honor, sir, it is all true. Lord Rawdon's successes were wholly momentary. The arrival of three fresh regiments at Charleston—not destined for service here—enabled him to make a rapid march for the relief of Ninety-Six. That duty done, he feels himself unable to retain the post he has relieved.

His only hope was to save the garrison, and cover the exodus of the loyalist inhabitants. His force is inadequate for more."

"But there will be new regiments from Great Britain."

"That is impossible. Her resources are exhausted; and these troops that have come out from Ireland are not to be relied on. I am able to assure you, that their officers are scarcely able to keep them in subjection, and numbers desert daily. I do not deceive you in anything. But, whether the British receive re-enforcements or not—whether they recover their power, or not—this region is doomed to be the theatre of war! The armies will ravage it; and you may judge, for yourself, from the events of *this* day, what will be the security of your family, when the marauders shall become hundreds, where there are now but scores. Hundreds lurk in the wake, and upon the wings, of both armies, whom neither army can catch or control. Let me entreat you, sir, to be warned in season, and to retire from the region till it is relieved from the presence of both armies. A month or two of absence will suffice. The British will be compelled to take shelter in Charleston before Christmas."

A smile curled the lip of the veteran. His son saw it, and hastily continued:—

"Do not, my dear father, suffer your intense loyalty to betray your understanding. I do not deal in prophecy, but in simple fact, of which your own reason may assure you at any moment. Look at the state of the case. You have seen the British recently abandoning post after post; contracting their sphere of operations; relieving a post merely to leave it to the enemy; withdrawing from their homes a whole community, as no longer able to protect them; hiring foreign mercenaries; unable to rely upon their Irish subsidies, *now* almost the only source upon which they can count for any; and under continual apprehension in Charleston, their chief garrison, which betrays either their timidity or their conscious weakness."

"Oh! that is because Charleston is entrusted to such a dirty scoundrel as Balfour."

"No, sir! Balfour is a selfish and dastardly rogue, but he has not neglected the interests of his king, though he has grievously mistaken them. He could do no better with the

means allowed him. His means are now exhausted. Rawdon's are exhausted. Rawdon is an able man, one of the ablest of the British army, but he is sick of the service, and he foresees its disasters. He is now claiming to be an invalid—"

"Sir, I tell you, my Lord Rawdon is in as fine health as any man I ever saw. Remember, it is not three weeks since I had him at my board."

"And yet I tell you, that my Lord Rawdon will retire to Europe, on the plea of ill health, as soon as he gets back to Charleston."

"Prophecy again, Willie."

"You will see. I know all their secrets. I have given you the true history. But, there can be no doubt, that Rawdon is in full retreat. Suppose, sir, that, within a week, you hear this news confirmed by other authorities—will you then retire to the hills of Santee? I do not ask you to believe me, though you surely know that I could never deceive you. But if other proofs reach you, sir, will you not then see and feel the necessity of putting my sisters and yourself in a place of safety?"

"But what will my flight—for such it will be—what will it argue to my Lord Rawdon?"

"Nothing more than a common prudence—having reference to the safety of women and children. Lord Rawdon knows your loyalty—knows that, in your situation, you can not be a combatant. Nay, ask himself, and he will tell you, put these girl-children out of the way of the two opposing armies."

After a pause the old man said:—

"I will think of it, Willie. I will think of it. But let us join Carrie."

At that moment, Carrie was heard singing in the piazza, and no doubt St. Julien was her companion—perhaps her only one. He had had an excellent opportunity. The old baron thought of this. He had another twinge, almost like one of the gout, as he recollected how long they had been left together. Little Peter was again put in requisition—and the veteran, chair and cushions, were wheeled from the supper-room into the parlor, and from parlor to piazza, where they certainly found St. St. Julien and Carrie alone together. Little Lottie, tired out, had been carried off to bed.

There was nothing suspicious in the appearance of the two who occupied the piazza on the appearance of father and son. They were not particularly near each other, and neither of them betrayed any confusion. But the old man still had twinges, and, what with the reflection that "the Frenchman"—as old Sinclair still persisted in calling St. Julien—had enjoyed a most excellent opportunity which he could scarcely, as an old soldier, be supposed to have neglected, and the startling and totally unexpected intelligence, as disagreeable as startling, which his son had revealed to him, the veteran was just as querulous as he could be within gentlemanly limits. St. Julien heard quietly the growlings of the senior, and said nothing. Willie Sinclair was as playful as if neither war, nor rebellion, nor treachery, were in the land, and Carrie laughed as light-heartedly at his badinage as if her lover were not sitting within six feet of her.

"The worst of your gout, my dear father," said Willie—"and I suppose it is the case with other gouty persons—is that you not only feel pain, but that you do not sympathize with pleasure. Now, sir, sitting here in the delicious balmy softness of this breeze, with the moon just rising over that pine forest, everything so calm, so soft, so delicious, it is wonderful that anything—care, pain, fear, doubt, apprehension—should leave us totally insensible of the prospect—the scene—the sweet serenity and heaven-like peace, over earth and heaven. The heart ought to soften insensibly, the fancy become lively, the whole soul winged and rising in sympathy with the rich, pure, delicious nature, every pulse of which just now seems to respond in exquisite harmony. Who thinks of strife now—who remembers the past conflict, or the past danger? It seems sinful, indeed, that we should not forget. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof;" and let the Future bring its own mission of mischief, without sending expresses to bring in the intelligence."

And, sooth to say, the scene was very sweet and beautiful—so calm, so serene; the pines slumbered, or only murmured to the zephyr—the moon, meanwhile, hallowed all their tops with the softest effulgence—in the blue heavens, large masses of white, creamy clouds floated away slowly from the approaching

orb of night,—but not so fast, but that they momentarily put on fresh robes of silver, and grew themselves to glories as they swept away with their long trailing garments of softest lustre. Down the long dark avenue, the few fires kept up by the dragoons, grew gradually dim, in the increasing light of the moon, which covered the shadowy foliage with its own brightness, and now began to scatter a thousand droplets, which, falling through the thick evergreen tops, lay upon earth like so many bright pearls imploring to be gathered. Hardly a sound was heard to break the delicious serenity of the scene; save now and then a murmur from the remoter part of the encampment, where groups of the dragoons kept wakeful in merry chat or song, beguiling their watch as they could with the small resources of a volunteer soldiery. Occasionally, the faint cries of a hound in the forest, hunting *con amore*, or crying for a lost master, added to the picturesque sweetness of the night.

“Let no one disparage our plain country, as wanting in scenic beauty,” said Willie Sinclair, “when we possess such blue skies, such delicious moonlight, such vast plains of verdure, tree striving with tree for the embrace with light and air; such a wilderness of shrub and flower; shrubs that give out odor as you crush them, flowers that woo your every step with bloom and beauty as you go, and birds that sing in clouds, with a gush of voices that tell only of summer buds and blossoms, and summer fancies. Ah, Carrie, shall the time ever come when there shall cease to be a glory for our eyes in yonder moon—when the bloom shall pass away from the forest, and the perfume from the flower, and we shall only pursue our way among walks of winter, our feet among the dead, to find the vista ending only in a cheerless grave?”

“A sad thought! and this is not the season for sad thoughts, Willie. You are here to-day and gone to-morrow. Do not sadden our moments now, by gloomy fancies.”

“I will not! Come! I will be generous. You have not heard me sing for a long time, and I have a new song, made by our partisan troubadour, gallant George Dennison.”

“What! have you a poet too among your rascallions?” demanded the veteran colonel.

“Ay, sir, and it is perhaps an argument in favor of our cause

that we can boast so good a poet as George Dennison, since the poets have been always patriots."

"If so, Willie, your cause is lost: for *our* army boasts of Major André and Henry Barry," quoth the colonel.

"Say nothing of poor André, father," said Carrie Sinclair.

"No! no! And the less said of Harry Barry as a poet, perhaps the better. I should be sorry to do so much wrong to Dennison's muse as to subject her to a comparison with that of the little major. But you shall hear how our own Georgie sings. He makes his own music, by the way, as well as the words, and is an improvisatore. The song which I now give you was struck off at a heat, one night, over the supper-table of Captain Porgy, while we lay on the Great Pedee. We had Colonels Maham and Singleton at supper, and half a score besides. I admit that the poet's inspiration did not come till supper was quite over, and the Jamaica in free circulation."

"Well, leave off the long preface and begin," said the baron. "I confess, Willie, I not only wish to hear you sing once more, but I am curious to see what sort of a poet you keep in your rebel tents."

Willie Sinclair tried and tuned the guitar in a few moments, then sang the following lyric in a fine, powerful voice, and with considerable taste and spirit:—

1.

"My country is my mistress,
And in her beauties rare,
I read the sweetest histories
That make a loved one dear:
Her charms invite to glory,
They won the brave of yore,
And linked with gallant story
Shall win for evermore.
My heart, my heart, dear mistress,
My heart is at thy feet!

2.

"Do foemen gaze upon thee,
With eager thirst to spoil,
To wrest thy glory from thee,
And trample on thy soil?
Ho! let me hear thy summons,

But lift thy spear and cry,
 'Let him who loves his country,
 Protect her rights or die!—
 My sword, my sword, dear mistress,
 My sword is at thy feet!

3.

"I'm but a forest ranger,
 With cloak and cap awry,
 But, in the hour of danger,
 I'll do for thee or die;
 The charms that won our sires,
 Are fresh and sweet to me,
 As when, through hostile fires,
 Their brave souls set thee free!
 My life, my life, dear mistress,
 My life is at thy feet!"

"And it is such stuff as this that satisfies your patriotism, is it? It is worthy of the Jamaica which inspired it. Why, Willie, it has not even the merit of decent rhyme. How do you make 'from thee' and 'upon thee' correspond? And what a gross license is taken in making 'mistress' and 'hist'ries' rhyme! Shocking! The fellow must be an Irishman, I fancy."

"He is of the stock, at all events. But you must not be too exacting about the rhymes in a song, where much liberty is usually allowed. Have you seen the poems of the new Scotch poet, a lad named Burns, a mere peasant, who is astonishing the British people by his native melodies? Dennison has several of them, and they are very sweet and simple, and withal very touching, but the verses are just as rude, and free and easy, as those of Dennison; not a whit better in respect to rhyme; but that does not materially hurt them for singing, and a little rudeness may be always permitted where the measure is correct, and where the sentiment is good. Besides, this of Dennison was an absolute outgushing at the moment—an improvisation—and I hold it to be a wonderful proof of the spontaneous merit of the minstrel."

"Pooh! pooh! there is no such thing as improvising English poetry. I have no doubt he made it by dint of repeated hammering in his private workshop, and his chief merit is in memo-

rizing it well. They say that Sheridan does the same thing in his epigrams and speeches. But I have had enough of your backwoods genius. British poetry is good enough for me, and will serve our purposes for the next hundred years. I must go to bed. Mr. St. Julien, you take a bed with us of course, and we shall see you in the morning."

"No, sir! I am obliged to you, but I must not indulge in any such luxury now. I will share the night with my dragoons. I am sorry to add, sir, that we shall ride at dawn."

"Well, sir, be at home here while you stay. Your friend will do the honors. Good night, sir. Willie, you will see me before you retire?"

"Yes, sir: I will help you now to your chamber."

"No! no! Little Peter is better able to do that. He knows just how to manage it. Carrie, my child."

She flew to him, and kissed him fondly.

"I will visit you when Willie does, father."

"Very good; only do not be too late."

When the old man had retired, Willie Sinclair proposed a walk to his sister and St. Julien, through the encampment of the dragoons, who skirted the avenue in groups, their horses all being tethered to the trees on the lower side. As they appeared, the bugler of the corps, a fellow of no small merit in his department, stealing off to the end of the avenue, welcomed them with a plaintive German air, the long-drawn melancholy notes of which chimed harmoniously with the hour and the scene. By the failing camp-fires and the slowly-rising moon, the picturesque of the bivouac was greatly enlivened and increased.

"What a glorious sight must an encampment of a great army be," exclaimed Carrie, "an army, such as they see in Europe, twenty or thirty thousand men, gayly caparisoned, helmets of polished steel, plumes flaunting in air, silken and gorgeous banners, and glittering harness."

"Yes, indeed, Carrie; a magnificent spectacle. We can show you no such sight in Carolina. But a dragoon charge through an open pine wood, Carrie, is a sight also worth seeing."

"She may see something of the shock of armies here before

long," was the remark of St. Julien. "I hope, Sinclair, that you persuaded your father to remove to the Hills."

"I tried to do it. I gave him all the reasons I could for it; and you, Carrie, must follow up the counsel when I am gone. Better, indeed, that you should affect a degree of apprehension that you may not feel, so that you attain this object."

"But is there really any danger of this?" asked the damsel, in lower tones.

"Yes! nothing can be more probable. Within ten days the two armies may cross bayonets on these very plains. I shall urge upon him the removal of the family again to-night; but I fear with no success. My father is not easily to be persuaded that the British army is not fully able to give him security in his own homestead; and to every argument which I offer he opposes their invincibility. He supposes that all I say is the result only of our presumptuous hopes and still more presumptuous conceit. But here comes Little Peter, St. Julien, bringing out a jug of Jamaica which I ordered for the use of your troop. Have it shared among them, and then we will prepare for sleep. I need more than I get; and the two hours that I enjoyed on your bed this morning, Carrie, have only increased my appetite for half a dozen more to-night."

Little Peter now appeared. The jug of Jamaica was distributed among the eager dragoons; and, while St. Julien escorted Carrie toward the dwelling—an opportunity for the lovers' leave-taking thus accorded, which we are sure was not unprofitably employed—Sinclair found his way among the dragoons, shaking hands with their best men, and showing himself familiarly to all. The troop had been raised by himself, and he knew the way to make himself popular with them. When he rejoined his sister and St. Julien, they were again in the piazza, the latter being ready to depart. The two separated in silence; but there was a speech in the final squeeze of the hand which he gave her, which had in it far more eloquence than any words of tenderness.

St. Julien strolled out slowly to join his dragoons, while Willie and his sister proceeded together to the chamber of the father. It is needless that we follow them thither. We can well conceive, by what we already know of the parties, the sort

of conversation that took place between them. Of course, Willie reurged the removal of the family to the hills of Santee.

"No, no, Willie! If I go anywhere, I retire to the city! If rebellion is to be triumphant, this country is no place for me!"

"You will think better of it. Our triumph involves no forfeiture of those securities of law and liberty which make a country precious to a people."

"It does! it does! Once break down the barrier of rightful authority, and there is an end to all security—all right—all liberty! Then rapine and appetite will rage like wolves throughout the land! But I will consider your suggestion. It will be time enough when the two armies approach the neighborhood, to determine. We shall have sufficient premonition of the approach of the danger."

"I am not so sure of that, sir; but I can say no more. Only, sir, let me entreat that you be governed in what you do, by the single consideration of what is due to the safety of the girls."

"Surely, Willie, surely! I think of them only."

And they wrung each other's hands and parted, Carrie accompanying Willie to his apartments. They could hear a deep sigh from the father's chamber after they had left it. Poor old man! He had many foes to his own happiness to encounter in his own prejudices. Such is always the danger, where a strong will, tortured by conventional laws, is desirous of subduing the most natural of human instincts. What to him were the fancied rights of the German monarch of Great Britain, weighed against the claims of his own children, and the sympathies with his native soil? Nothing, really; but very serious obstacles, indeed, when we consider the training, the teaching, and the whole experience of his early life. It ~~is~~ this very sort of despotism, that of convention and experience, however valuable in a thousand respects, which make it so difficult for men, who have passed the middle period of life, to learn or to appreciate the new truth—the inevitable necessity of progress. It is not that they can not learn; it is because the task is so much harder to unlearn! And old men rarely love to clear new lands;—they prefer to manure the old.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SCOUT AGAINST SCOUT—TAKING TRAIL.

BETWEEN brother and sister, so really kindred and truly affectionate as Willie and Carrie Sinclair, we may readily conceive that the parting was as difficult as it was tender. But it was at last effected, and Willie laid himself down to slumber. He needed sleep and felt weariness, and was just dropping into that dreamy condition of mind, which promises a sleep equally serene and refreshing, when he heard a door open below, a rustling in the passage to his chamber, and then the chamber-door itself, as it turned with a creak upon its hinges. He raised himself up at the moment, and in another second he found 'Bram at his side, fresh from that famous castle in the "Four-Hole Swamp," where we had the pleasure first to introduce the stalwart and faithful slave to the knowledge of our readers.

"Ha, 'Bram! You are late! All right?"

"All right as he kin be, Mass Willie. I bin keep late, you see, sence dat fellow, Jim Ballou, bin git drunk on de road. He hab bottle in he pocket, Mass Willie, and nebber 'top drink tell he finish 'em; all he se'f, 'cepting one sup he gee to me."

"And where's Ballou now?"

"He's down stairs; he da wait for you to call 'em. I no bring 'em up, for 'sturb you in you sleeping, and mek' noise, wid he cowbelly shoes; and besides he ain't quite git over he drunk yit."

"Did he bring in any papers?"

"Yes, he git 'em! I wants 'em to gee me; I fear'd he will loss 'em; but he say, 'No truss 'em to you, nigger.' No truss 'em to me! an' he so drunk all day, he kain't truss hese'f."

"Bring him up here, 'Bram."

Jim Ballou made his appearance a few moments after. He was a well-made, large, vigorous fellow, with an ingenuous, open countenance, frank and fair, but now flushed with the signs of frequent intemperance. He was now only half sober,

and just drunk in that degree which leaves one in full persuasion of his own entire competence and importance. Like most persons of sanguine temperament, possessed of strength and courage—and, we may add, conscious of his own fidelity—he was apt to be a little impudent when under the influence of liquor. His first entrance into the chamber would have satisfied Willie Sinclair of his condition, without rendering necessary the report of the slave, which was also entirely to be relied on. Sinclair, accordingly, received him with great gravity, sitting on the side of the bed.

“Have you brought the papers, Ballou?”

“That I have, major; they’re all safe; but I’ve had work, riding and fasting,” giving the papers as he spoke.

“And drinking, Ballou?”

“Yes, indeed, major, you may say that. If ’twan’t for a sup or two, now and then, at the bottle, a poor fellow would break down in the hard riding I’ve got to do.”

“You seem to suffer from it, Ballou; and I am to suppose you do, since you complain of it.”

“Oh, deuce take the complaint, major! I’m not given to complainings, though the work is mighty hard I have to do. Yet, I gits on; and, as I takes a breeze now and then, I contrives to keep up. I’m good for a frolic, major, whenever there’s a chaine.”

The major only gave the scout a glance of the eye, and then proceeded to examine the papers which he brought. This he did with earnestness and deliberation. Meanwhile, Ballou strode across the chamber, with a whistle, picked up and examined the alabaster ornaments upon the mantelpiece, upset a vase of flowers, awkwardly replaced them, still whistling, rolled over to the window, and stretched his head out for the enjoyment of the moonlight. Sinclair followed him for a moment with his eye.

“Ballou!” he called.

“Yes, major! Here we are. Are them papers all right, major?”

“Right! You saw General Marion?”

“Yes, sir, the ‘Fox’ is right and lively. He gin me a full half-hour’s talk.”

"I hope you were sober, sir, while he did so."

"As a judge, sir! Oh! yes—couldn't be otherwise, sir; at that time hadn't drank a thimbleful of the element. Saw the Fox, sir, as I say, and we talked a while; saw Colonel Maham too, sir—had a talk with him. Colonel Singleton had something to say, sir—not much, but he's a gentleman, sir—what he had to say was very sensible, and quite elegant. But didn't get the first nip of the element from either of the gentlemen."

"And where are they now, Ballou?"

"Well, sir, taking all things into 'count—what they said, and what I suppose they had to do—they are now opposite to Cave Hall. They talked of pushing upward, off-hand, sir, and with a breezy spur. Colonel Singleton told me to tell you that the boats would be ready at your landing to-morrow, and that you must not delay them."

"Did you have to go down to Nelson's?"

"Yes, major. That was a devil of a ride—a day of it—and a mighty lean supper to sleep upon."

"Any report from that quarter, sir?"

"All quiet, I believe, sir?" I got from some niggers that there had been a small party of tory gentlemen at Wantoot, a day or two ago, but they went off to the South somewhere."

The answers were given with tolerable clearness. There was some rambling talk on the part of the scout—for such was Jim Ballou, and one of the best in the service, when sober—but we have condensed the substance of his replies into the briefest language. This rambling of the speaker, with a little too much of the dashing in his tones and manner, which Sinclair thought quite too familiar and obtrusive, were now to find their commentary.

"Ballou, you have been drinking."

"No denying the insinuation, major. It's my little infirmity, sir. But, drunk or sober, I know my duty, sir, and I do it, sir—I do it."

"You may think so, Ballou, but you will find few persons of the same opinion. I certainly can not trust a man, whom, at any moment, a bottle of rum or whiskey may seduce—who, no matter what the business in hand, the peril to himself or others, the importance of his trusts, or the necessity of having all his

wits about him, forgets all in the most miserable and beastly temptations!"

"Severe, major—rather. Severe, I may say! I'm a sinner, in that way, sir, I admit—but I never neglect my duty, major!—never!"

"I do not know that!—I do not believe it! No man who puts it out of his own power to control his physical and mental energies, and to use them at a moment's warning, but must, some time or other, neglect his duties! I *know* that you have neglected yours! You should have met me last evening at 'Bram's castle.'"

"I tried, sir, but I couldn't. The thing was decidedly impossible, major—not to be done—not to be done! Couldn't do it—couldn't!"

"Not so, sir—you could! You were drinking yesterday as well as to-day. More, sir, your indiscretion *has* done mischief! You have suffered yourself to be seen—nay, followed, into the swamp—so that Hell-fire Dick, and some of his gang, are possessed of all the clues to that place of refuge."

The fellow was startled and humbled. His tones and manner changed. He grew quite sober on the instant. He knew—none better—how important to the party was the secret of their hiding-places.

"Oh! Major Willie, tell me, it ain't so. You're just trying to scare me—that you are—to scare me—"

"It is so, Ballou, and we are no longer secure in a refuge which would have been particularly important at this juncture, if the knowledge had been confined to ourselves. Look at that paper. I took it this day from the pocket of Hell-fire Dick!"

"What! you had *him* in your hands?—Devil Dick in your hands?"

"Read the paper."

The scout read and struck his head with his hands.

"It's true, sir! It's true! I've been a fool and a beast, sir. It's clear that Hell-fire Dick followed me to the swamp. But you have him—you have hung him, sir—he was outlawed, you know. You hung him of course—heels free—head on one side—you hung him!"

"He has escaped! and no doubt remembers the route to the

castle, just as well without this memorandum as with it. Nay, more: he had with him a party of four others, all of whom are probably possessed of the same secret."

"Who are they, sir?" asked the scout quickly.

"Sam Brydone—"

"Ah! Skin-the-Serpent, as they calls him."

"Ralph Brunson—"

"He's the 'Trailer,' and a mighty good scout, but a great rascal. And, sir—he gets drunk too."

"Does that improve his quality as a scout?"

"Oh! no, sir; but, may be, it will give me a better chance at him!"

The scout did not see how fatal was the admission that he thus made. Sinclair quietly remarked—

"And he, possibly, congratulates himself upon the advantage which a like habit in you will afford to him. Drunkenness, you see, is no merit in a scout."

"I'm afraid, sir, that's a true notion—a true notion."

"The other fellows were Joe Best and Pete Blodgit."

"What sir—*our* Pete!"

"Yes: Best will not trouble us. He was hung, yesterday, by the dragoons, as an outlaw, after being severely wounded. Blodgit is a person to be watched rather than feared. There may be others to whom Hell-fire Dick has imparted his discovery; but two of those I have mentioned were probably with him when he made it. They were with him just afterward. And now, sir, you see what is due to your drunkenness. For this offence I will not punish you, but I can no longer trust you, Ballou."

"Oh! sir—major—you call that no punishment—no punishment—to me, sir, Jim Ballou—to me!"

"It was the penalty, well known to you, of such an offence as yours, yet you have not feared it, Ballou. I am unwilling to risk being placed in a relation with you in which I may *have* to punish you; for I can not forget that we have known each other in boyhood; and I prefer to dismiss you from my service."

"Dismiss me from your service—me, Jim Ballou! Oh! no! major, you can't do that. I can't be dismissed. I'm your man,

sir—by all that's affectionate and interesting, major—I'm your man. Can't be dismissed, sir—stick to you right and left, for'ad and backward, sir—just like your right hand, sir—like your dog, sir—like your nigger, major—like your nigger."

"No, Ballou; we must part."

"Psho, major—but you must be jesting. It's unpleasant jesting, sir, between old friends, Dismiss me! God bless me! What a notion—all a notion, sir. Why, Willie Sinclair, 'twas Jim Ballou that first taught you to cross a horse."

"I'm sorry, Ballou—sorry enough—but I can't trust you any more."

"What! and only for a little familiarity with the jug—jug! with the jug—an innocent jug—a bottle, sir, not a jug. Jugs of Jamaica are not to be had every day. A mere innocent familiarity with a bottle—a black bottle of Jamaica. No, no! Major Willie, you can't do it. The thing won't be done. Dismiss me from your service! I won't swear, major, but I'll take a celestial oath upon it, that the thing can't be done—won't be done, sir—won't suffer itself to be done."

"It must be done." More seriously.

"And only for that little familiarity with the bottle. Why, major, the bottle rather helps my ability. It does, sir. A touch of the element, sir, always gives me a sort of life to be up and doing, just as if I had a pair of wings, sir—makes me fly, sir, makes me fly."

"You shall fly no more for me, Ballou, under its inspirations."

"Come, come, major! stop that now. It makes me feel uneasy, sir—it does. I know, sir, that I'm a fool, sir—easy to be persuaded, sir, when the liquor speaks; but what then? Aint I here—aint the papers, there—aint the duty done."

"Yes! and as I have shown you, it is sometimes overdone; and I owe it to the cause in which I am engaged, to peril none of its secrets in the hands of a man who can not resist the miserable temptation of the bottle. I am sorry to part with you, Ballou; no one better knows your ability than I do;—and I know you to be a true friend of your country;—more, sir, I have loved you as one associated with all my childish sports and exercises; but we must part. You can take service in the

brigade, as scout or soldier, but I can give you no more special trusts."

"Oh! Willie Sinclair! Are you serious now?" and the fellow's voice trembled.

"I am, Ballou—as serious as I ever was in all my life. Serious and sorry! Sorry to lose you—sorry for yourself. Sorry that one of our best scouts should be lost to our service, where he might serve us best if he would."

The tears gushed from the fellow's eyes, and he fell upon his knees in great agitation. His voice was husky with emotion, as he cried:—

"Pardon me this once, major—Willie Sinclair—pardon me this once, and I will swear. Only hear me swear—'Lord God have mercy and give me strength as I swear by my eternal safety, never, of my free will, to taste another drop of the infernal liquor!'—There, major—there!"

"An awful oath, Ballou. Rise up, my poor fellow."

"It's made, Major Willie. It's made. Oh! Major Willie, won't you trust me now?"

"God forbid that I should discourage your efforts for self-recovery. I *will* trust you, Ballou—see that you do not forget your vow."

"God help and strengthen me to keep it! and I will keep it, Willie Sinclair—as a man that calls upon God to look and watch his proceedings. I'm a man, and strong enough for that, or I'm carrion, and only fit for the buzzards."

"It is a solemn covenant, Ballou, that you have made with God—"

"And you! I know—I mean it to be solemn! I love liquor, and I've been easy to be led off by the temptation. But I've sworn! and now, major, try me. Set me at work—try me with a hard service;—I want to be up and doing."

"Conquer yourself, Ballou, and I will take you to my heart for ever. You are a noble and faithful fellow, and only free yourself from this dangerous habit, and you are worthy of any man's friendship. Rise, my friend, rise. Believe me, I felt as much pain at the thought of parting with you, as I ever felt on any occasion in my life."

The fellow rose from the floor, brushed the tears hastily from his eyes, and sobbed :—

“Try me again, major—try me, Willie Sinclair—and let me make myself respectable again. I want to be at work !”

“You must go now, Ballou, and snatch a few hours of sleep. Rest yourself at all events, as well as you can. With the morning you shall have work—the very sort that you require.”

“What is it, major ? Tell me now that I may think over it to-night. I do all my thinking at night when I’m a-bed—I do.”

“It is to take the trail of Devil Dick, and his companions, the Trailer and the Serpent. They are, no doubt, all herded together in the Santee swamp ; and too near us to suffer us to sleep quietly. Our dragoons may rout them out to-morrow, as they have work to do in that quarter—in the very neighborhood, probably, where they all harbor. Our men will hardly find them, as they will have something better to do than to seek them. They will skulk rather than fly, for I feel sure that their aim is the sacking of the Barony. They know the range as well as you and I, and will hang about us, and lie snug till we are off. Then they will probably up and follow ; take the road after us, or make a second attempt on the Barony. Now, do you see what is the work which you might make profitable ?”

“I think I do ! I do !”

“We must try and cut off these rascals, if we can do so without turning directly upon them. It is the work of a scout, rather than of a regiment. But it is not so essential to cut them off, as to cover ourselves. Ballou, I feel that I can trust your honor and fidelity, much more than I can your strength and sobriety. I wish you to cover me. To-morrow, I separate from the dragoons. I go alone, in disguise, within the precincts of an enemy’s post.”

“You’re not going to Orangeburg, major, are you ?”

“I am—there and the neighborhood.”

“Do you know that Inglehardt is certainly there ; and he is about as cold, as cunning, and as venomous as a snake in August.”

“I know all that ! Know him well. But is his command there ?”

"That I don't learn. But he was seen there only three days ago."

"But his mere presence does not make the place a British post."

"No, sir; but it is pretty much under British influence."

"I know that too; know exactly what I have to fear, and upon whom I may rely; and I have reason to believe that you are right when you report Inglehardt to be there or in the neighborhood. But the visit must be made. I have much to do there, and must see the commissary Travis."

"Don't trust *him*, major. Didn't 'Bram tell you? He's another snake—a snake!"

"I know more than 'Bram does, and I know Travis. Enough! The matter that I wish you to see to is this:—these outlaws are, no doubt, so harbored in the swamp that, as we can not seek for and push them, they will be able to see all our operations. Now, I must separate from the dragoons. These outlaws may detect the movement or not. If they do, seeing me alone, and in disguise, they will be apt to follow, just as the dogs take after the wounded buck, letting the herd run as they please. I shall have the start of them, but as I shall ride at my leisure, and have occasion to stop here and there, they can readily over-haul me, and my notion is—"

"Ah! I see, sir,—you wish me to take your trail also—your trail?"

"Exactly! 'Bram will have a similar duty; both of you will be armed. Where one fails to make a *point*, the other may be more successful; you can operate together, and both with me, in any event which needs our united strength; and finally, after you have safely covered me to Orangeburg, you will get a *dug-out*, and keep it hidden in the river swamp just below the landing at Holly-Dale."

"Travis's place, in the Fork?"

"Yes!—Now, Jim Ballou, you see the duty that requires to be done, and can readily determine for yourself how it should be done. I can teach you nothing as a scout. 'Bram is also good at the business. Have an understanding with him tonight, but, of course, you will work on separate tracks. Prescribe your plan, and he will follow it. I leave the procedure wholly to

your discretion, having shown you what is to be feared and from whom. I must say to you, however, that 'Hell-fire Dick' has got an increase of force, and may now number four or five, instead of two or three. But these fellows rarely keep all together, long. The division of the plunder commonly scatters them. Remember, however, should you succeed in surprising them, and destroying them, of course, you are still to pursue my track. There may be many such parties on the route, and I shall want you above. One of my scouts reports a small gang of seven, led by Cooper, the fellow who was supposed to have been left for dead by *our* Travis and Duesto, yet got off to the enemy though handcuffed to a dead man."

"I know! I know! Pendarvis was killed outright. I remember all about it—all!—and a bolder and blacker villain than Cooper don't trouble the country—Don't!"

"He has been seen within eight days again upon the Belleville road, as leader of a party of six. He had with him two of the Claytons of St. Mathew's—a little red-headed fellow, named Jones, and one Paul Sturner. A week before that his party was twice the number, and he was nearly run down by Captain Rumph's squad. Lieutenant Wannamaker was so close as to make a cut at him and wound the quarters of his horse. But he got off with the loss of two of his party, who were cut down by the troopers. He is a scoundrel of wonderful energies and endurance, and I have reason to think would be especially pleased to find me in his meshes. At all events, there will be enough to tax all your vigilance, even if you succeed in throwing out or destroying this Hell-fire Dick and his party. Am I fully understood, Ballou?"

"Yes, Major Willie—and you will fully trust me? You will!"

"I will! Bring up 'Bram that I may give him his lesson in your presence."

We need not pursue this conference further. Enough that all the parties received their instructions, and retired for the night. At dawn, the grounds were empty—Willie Sinclair, Peyre St. Julien, the dragoons—all were gone; but the wakeful eyes of Carrie Sinclair had witnessed their departure, and her waving hands and murmured prayer had blessed their progress.

What was that progress? We must report it briefly. It was to carry off all the cattle, stock of every kind, grain and forage, that could be gleaned from the plantations along the Santee in this particular precinct. The boats of Marion were waiting—from morning to night the dragoons were busy; and corn and fodder, and cattle, which had been hitherto left to the doubtful charge of Master Pete Blodgit, were withdrawn from his to a safer keeping. Blodgit, himself, kept out of the way in the woods, while Sinclair and the dragoons were on the place. He had found a hiding-place with the outlaws, leaving his mother to propitiate the anger of their late patron. She whined at him for pity, and his mercy allowed her to remain in the cottage, the shelter of which her criminal hypocrisy had so completely forfeited. It was at sunset, and when the day's work was nearly done, that Sinclair and St. Julien met in conference. A harsher duty awaited the latter and found him reluctant.

"You are now, Peyre, to carry off all the stock, except brood-hogs, and cows with calves, from the Sinclair Barony."

"How, Willie, can I do that?"

"It must be done, Peyre; you can not distinguish between whigs and loyalists, and favor the latter. It must be done. We must leave neither hair nor hide to the enemy. But you need not be seen in the business. I have prepared Benny Bowlegs, the driver, for what he has to expect and to do, and he is ready to father the offence upon the tories. You will, however, give him an acknowledgment of what you take, and he will convey it to my sister. Your paper will establish a claim upon government, should it ever reach security and permanence. One more matter. I fear for the safety of the Barony. You will leave a corporal's guard on the place—known only to Benny—in close shelter in the swamp. He will provision it. Instruct your officer to be ready at call, to defend or protect the family from these marauders. They will hardly need to stay a week. With the rest of your command, this duty done—and that should be in two days more—then, giving a wide berth to Orangeburg, sweep up by Rumph's at Turkey hill, and cross the North Edisto at Shilling's; put yourself in the thickets by Bull-fight pond, and wait my message, either by Ballou or 'Bram. Of course, you will have your scouts

busy, and watchful, down even to the bridge at Orangeburg. It is possible that I may have some trouble, as I have certainly some risks at Orangeburg and the neighborhood, for my time will be divided between Travis's plantation and the village. Above all, have two or three expert fellows for ever with an eye on Travis's. If Inglehardt be about, the utmost vigilance is necessary."

Fully understanding each other, the major parted with his friend at nightfall. He went alone, still in the disguise of a backwoodsman, and with hair and beard not his own. His pistols were at hand, and he wore a plain basket-hilted cut-and-thrust at his side—a weapon in the use of which he excelled—having taken lessons from the Italian, Baldachezzo, who, a little while before the war, had been a famous teacher of the young gentry of the Carolinas. Sinclair sped away with confidence and with seeming security; and so, at the same time, did St. Julien with his troop, pushing down to the river some six miles off, where one party crossed with the boats and forage, and the other bivouacked in the swamp.

Night had fallen. The woods were silent. For three miles from the cottage of Blodgit, on either hand, they showed no signs of life for several hours. But there was life, nevertheless, human life, wakeful, watchful, and close harboring within the immediate precincts of the cottage. Blodgit, we may mention, had not shown himself to any one of the foragers; and, this, perhaps, had tended somewhat to make his mother's plea to Sinclair successful. He had left the Barony with the full purpose of expelling the wretched old woman, taking from her the negro-girl whom his sister had lent her, and burning the hovel to the ground. But he had relented in his sterner purpose, as he beheld the miserable condition of the beldam. Her real poverty and wretchedness saved her from the proper punishment of her guilt. He gave her fifty bushels of corn for her own support, leaving it to her son, who had the fruitful abilities of the rogue, to provide her with the bacon which he knew he could always find. He left nothing for *him*, and unless he used the corn allotted for his mother, there was no provision made for his own horse or any other.

But after a few hours had elapsed from the departure of the

troopers, the senses of both Ballou and 'Bram, closely harbored in concealing thickets, though apart, within a quarter of a mile of the cottage, were saluted with the faint blasts of a common horn. They pricked up their ears as they heard, and each prepared, after the manner of the scout, to make himself acquainted with the source of signal. Ballou was now on his good behavior. A double duty was in fact before him. He was to approve himself capable of abstinence, a virtue which he had not before affected; and to exercise his best *scouting* capacities, for which his credit was already great. Except Jack Bannister of the Congarees, a noble yeoman of the whig side, and one Watson Gray, a tory, Jim Ballou was the most famous scout of all the Santee region. That any exception could be made, in conferring this rank upon him, had been due to his former sottishness. He was now to recover ground, and reassert his superior merits. He determined, accordingly, to employ all his energies, and not mistake a single point in the game. The first step, he felt when he heard the horn and the replies to it, which followed shortly after, had been successfully taken. All the sounds that reached him were from below—*none were from the rear*—no enemy lay behind him, and he could thus advance in security. *To feel his way safely forward*, is the great necessity for a scout. This he can only do when assured that he is not followed. His game is to take the trail after others; and, lying *perdu*, Ballou waited for other signals.

These were soon repeated, and this time from the direction of Blodgit's cottage. They were answered more distinctly from below—three several blasts. Between the woods which he and 'Bram occupied, and those whence the signals came, there ran a broad wagon-trace down to the river's landing. This trace intersected the main road within a few yards of the spot where the cottage stood. A third blast, more lively and thrice repeated, from this latter precinct, called for further replies, which Ballou was pleased to perceive were much nearer at hand. He felt that he should soon be enabled to pick his way out, and, perhaps, be permitted to see, himself unseen, the parties who found it thus necessary to commune together. Let us approach the place of meeting also.

Among the oaks directly in front of his cottage, stood Pete

Blodgit, waiting for the outlaws whom he had summoned. They had helped to ruin him; he owed them no love; but he was a wretched dependant upon others for protection, and he had cut himself off from better associates. With the exception of the small amount in Spanish milled dollars, which he had succeeded in withholding from Willie Sinclair, at their late settlement, and which his mother held with the tenacious fingers of avarice, he had not a single sixpence. The means of farther gains, from the same source, had been swept away that day by the foragers—he had seen the whole procedure from a familiar place of concealment; and Dick of Tophet, his ally, had torn away his horse with violence. He was in no mood to love those who had thus caused him to lose, and had besides robbed him; but he had no alternative. Cut off from the succor of the good, the weak who are also vicious have no refuge but with the wicked! The milk of Blodgit's bosom was soured and embittered; but his blood was too feeble in its rush to suffer him to show the hate and vexation which he felt. He had—to use his own expressive phraseology—"to grin and bear it!"

He was not long alone, being soon joined by the Trailer, Ralph Brunson. *His nom de guerre*, we may remark, was due also to his good reputation as a scout. He was considered a sure trailer, though held to be somewhat slow. The qualities of men and dogs are graduated and qualified in like manner. The Trailer came on foot, as did the others subsequently. They had hidden their horses in the woods.

"Nobody yit up but me, Pete?"

"You're the first. But I reckon it's the Sarpent that will be next. He was more up upon the hill. The farthest horn must ha' been Devil Dick's."

"Yes, and he'll git here slow; for his scalds ain't any the better for his hard run to-day."

"I'm afear'd he's a'most knocked up my critter."

"Well, you needn't care about that, sence thyars no chaine that you'll ever git her agin, onless Dick happens to see that he kin cross a better. He won't keep your'n a bit longer than that."

"It's mighty hard that I should lose my critter, and me a lame pusson too."

"Oh! Lord, ef that was the only hardship that one had to grin under, the world would be a comfortable one enough for a poor man. But I reckon Sinclair's carried off everything from you; I cotched a sight or two of the transaction that made me jubous that you'd have nothing left better than acorns and pine-tops for man and beast."

"And you're right! He's swept off corn and fodder, hogs and cattle, everything he could carry, and whar the bread and meat is to come from the Lord only kin tell."

"It's mighty hard and cruel that a poor man should be robbed of all his airnings and support."

"And he a lame pusson too, and with a poor old sick mother, with the rheumatiz so bad that it would be a God's marcy ef she was safe in the ground."

"Yes, it's mighty hard, Pete. A poor man has no chainece with these rich harrystocrats, as Devil Dick calls 'em."

And the two very soon succeeded in persuading themselves, and one another, that the whole world was leagued in the cruel purpose to destroy them and starve them out, and rob them of their rights and all the bounties of earth and heaven. It is curious with what grateful logic the scoundrel will convince himself that he is a victim to the grossest wrongs on the part of the villanously virtuous. But the dialogue was at length arrested by the arrival of Brydone "the Serpent," and, after a while, Devil Dick himself appeared, accompanied by Jack Halliday, who was slightly wounded.

"Let's get in to your hole, Pete Blodgit," cried Dick of To-phet. "I'm a wanting help from the hands of your blessed mammy, who loves me as the devil loves the angel Gabriel. My back is all in a blister; and my ankles and wrists in a blaze. Lord! I could have wished ~~alm~~ almost that I had been hung up sooner than suffer from this fire all over. Come, open, Pete; I must git some salves and 'intments on my back, and I must have a shirt and jacket."

Dick ruled, and they entered the house together. They found Mother Blodgit, by the fire, rocking to and fro sulkily, and somewhat in the way. She was evidently not pleased with the turn which affairs had taken, though as yet she did not know the worst. Her little negro had reported the removal by

the dragoons, of all the corn, fodder, and stock. She had heard, too, a sharp and stern lesson from the lips of Sinclair, to which she could oppose no answer; and he had forbore to tell her all he knew. He had, however, shown her that he was aware of the Spanish dollars in her possession, but had concluded by bestowing them upon her;—a degree of generosity for which she professed herself thankful, though she cursed him in her heart while speaking. The poor, when vicious, are usually ungrateful; and a single boon withheld makes them forgetful of the thousand favors which have been previously bestowed upon them. But, as yet, she did not know that her son was horseless—that he had been robbed of his beast by the very outlaw who had helped to ruin him, and for whom he had done and sacrificed so much. Had she known, she would scarcely have found the desired ointments for the scorched back of Devil Dick—would scarcely have suffered her son to bestow upon the ruffian one of his best shirts and jackets. As it was, she suffered these sacrifices unwillingly; and brought forth her oils and ointments, without blessing or consecrating them lovingly to the work of healing. We need not detail the processes by which Dick of Tophet was rendered easier in the flesh, and habited anew in comfortable garments. The service was rendered after a fashion; and, cursing and crying alternately, as she saw the jug of Jamaica brought out from its covert, the old woman withdrew to her chamber, whence her grunts arose occasionally to relieve the monotony of the conversation, which took place among the outlaws.

Once more at ease, unpursued, and with strong drink before them, the goodly company began to go over the proceedings of the day. We, who know pretty much what these were, need not follow them in their commentary. We shall only note such portions of their dialogue as may be suggestive of the clues to such portions of this true history as are not yet in our hands.

“Well, they’ve carried off all your corn and fodder, hogs and cattle, Pete, and by this time they have ’em all across the river. The Sarpent tells me that Stuttering Peter [Horry] has been doing the same business below, as fur down as Nelson’s. Now, the question is, what does this mean? To my thinking it means

that we're to have both armies down upon us in mighty little time."

"You think so, Dick?"

"I'm pretty sure of it. But I don't see what we're to lose by that, for there's always good pickings about the country, when the armies are a-coming together. Thar's always so many rich folks flying with their families, and leaving everything behind them. Now, I'm jest a-waiting to see old Sinclair drivin' off from that Bairony. He'll not be able to carry off everything, not by hafe, and ef I don't gut it, and gut him too, and his d—d eternal son, the major, at the first chaince, then there's no sense in calling me 'Hell-fire Dick' any longer."

"Well, how are we to do now?"

"Thar's nothing to be done; jest now, while Willie Sinclair's down at the Bairony, and with such a lot of dragoons."

"But them dragoons, I reckon, will cross the river, as soon as they've swept the plantations on this side. They're pretty quick at the work, and clean out a farm in mighty short order. 'Twon't be two days, I reckon, before they'll finish that job."

"Air we safe hyar *now*, where we air?" said Dick.

"I reckon," said the Trailer. "I trailed St. Julien and his dragoons down to the river. They've got off hafe of them, and t'other hafe has fires lighted, and are camped for the night. Some of them air in the boats. They're now a good six miles off, and mighty tired. But, look you, Willie Sinclair ain't with the dragoons."

"How! not with the dragoons? Why, how's that, when he's been with 'em all day, directing and giving orders, and pushing after men and boats and working jest as hard as any."

"I know that; but he worn't with them when the dragoons marched down to the river, at sunset. I was in a '*harricane thick*,' on the butt eend of an almighty big tree, and safe kivered, and I could see every man as he filed down across the sandy run. Willie Sinclair worn't with 'em, I tell you."

"Then he's gone back to the Bairony! I wonder ef he took any of the dragoons with him?"

"I reckon not! I didn't count 'em, but I didn't miss any. Ef he took any, it couldn't be more than two or three. But I don't think he took any."

"Ef so, now would be the time to make a dash at the Bair-ony. They wouldn't look for us to-night."

"No? But after the work we've had, which of us is good for anything like a dash."

"Ah! Ef 'tworn't for this cussed scalding that I've got," groaned Dick of Tophet, writhing in his seat, "I'd show you how to make a dash. But you're right. Nothing's to be done to-night. We must git some sleep and some strength; and first for the strength, Blodgit, we must get some supper."

"I don't know whar you're to git it. I reckon thar's nothing better than dry meal in the house."

"Find something better, Pete, or we'll make a meal of *you*. Be stirring. I'm a famishing varmint."

Dick of Tophet was a person with whom Blodgit did not dare to trifle, and he proceeded in the search for something which would pacify the "varmint." At that moment the sounds of a horse's tread, at full gallop, were heard. It startled other ears than those of the outlaws, and Ballou and 'Bram, our two scouts, who had been peering with all their eyes through the logs of the cottage, were fain to steal off silently into the bushes, which they did in safety. A few moments after, the horseman thundered at the door. To the demand "Who's that?" the answer was prompt—"Eyes right!"—a pass-phrase evidently which had been previously agreed on. "It is Ben Nelson," said the Trailer, and the door was opened to the new-comer.

"Well, whar have *you* been, all this time, I wonder! We had a'most 'gin you up for lost."

"I wasn't lost, but took the  , which was pretty nigh to me, when the dragoons made the dash."

The account of the fellow, explaining his escape, was a confused one. It was felt to be so by the party.

"The fact is," said Devil Dick, "you got scared a little sooner, Ben Nelson, than anybody else. But the scare seems to have helped you to a safe road. What hev you to report?"

"Why, nothing much."

"Whar did you hide?"

"Across the road, in a thick bay a leetle this side of the clay hill."

"I know the place."

"I fastened the horse in the hollow, and creeped out to the roadside when the sun was a-setting; but nothing was to be seed except one man in a common homespun hunting-shirt. He rode by, and he had an uncommon fine beast."

"Ha! what sort of beast?"

"Powerful, strong, and big, a most glorious black, black without a spot."

"Yes, a blaze on his right shoulder."

"Mout be! I couldn't see on that side, he guine up, and I on the left side of the road."

"It is Willie Sinclair, by the powers, and he goes alone! He's for the Bairony, or further on. We must see in the morning. I'm the man to take that scent! Now, look you, boys, here's the way the cat must jump. We must gut that Bairony. Now's the time, I reckon, when these fellows of St. Julien are crossing to t'other side, and before the two armies gits down. It's a bad sign for us, I'm a thinking, them two armies coming down. It's a sign that Lord Rawdon ain't able to hold his hand with Greene. We must be making our market while we kin. I'm for gutting that Bairony; but I'm for taking the trail of Willie Sinclair at all resks. I owe him a knife," and Dick of Tophet displayed the carving-knife which he had caught up in his moment of flight. "Two or three of you, must scout day and night about the Bairony till you find the coast is clear—then put in and pull out. We'll be ready, I reckon, when the time comes. You, 'Skin-the-Serpent,' with Jack Halliday and Ben Nelson can take this business on your shoulders. The 'Trailer' and me will take after Willie Sinclair. I kin guess jist whar he's a guine. He's guine to sneak after old Travis's da'ter at Holly-Dale. He's been after her before. Ef 't ain't for that, what would he be in a disguise about?—in a homespun split shirt, and not in his uniform; and then with his great beard and whiskers which don't belong to his face at all. He's after that gal, mark what I'm a-saying."

"But what's it to us ef he is? What kin we git by taking trail of him?"

"I kin git my revenge out of his heart's blood!" answered Dick of Tophet fiercely; "but something more. What's he done with them hundred guineas that he tuk from poor Pete Blodgit? I reckon he's got hafe of 'em in his belt, and to'ther hafe he's left at the Bairony. So, you see, ef we plays out trumps, we stands a chaine, all of us, of picking up goulden stakes."

Dick the Devil, was apt to verify his proper claim to the title, by finally forcing his own will upon those with whom he associated. It was settled that, with the dawn, the party should divide, as he had indicated. The proceedings of both divisions were arranged at the sitting. It is needless to say that the ears of Ballou and 'Bram, drank in all the particulars of the arrangement, since the outlaws, apprehending no listeners, spoke in their ordinary tones of voice. Our scouts listened and watched to the last moment, when, after supping, and repeatedly drinking, the conspirators stretched themselves out upon the floor; satisfied that they were in no danger themselves, and with their horses hidden in the thicket. But hours had flitted by with noiseless rapidity before this was the case—the night was waning toward day—the moon was down—the stars wheeling more rapidly from sight. The cool breezes of the morning were beginning to sough and swell through the forest. Ballou and 'Bram, weary with the protracted watch of day and night, turned away from the hovel and slowly passed into cover. Not a word was spoken between them till they had left the cottage half a mile behind them. Then Ballou said:—

"'Bram, it's mighty hard that we should leave those scamps to a quiet sleep; but it's too late now to get down to the dragons and bring any of them up; and I am scarcely able to lift one leg after another—scarcely—one after another."

"An' dis nigger ain't able to lift he body on he legs! I mus' hab res', Jim Ballou—I mus' hab my sleep."

"It's a good six miles to the river—then we'd have to hunt up the camp, for they hide close, and then—why 't would be broad daylight long before we could get back—broad daylight. 'Bram, one good common sense rule for a good scout is never to break down. We must let these fellows have their chance—let 'em have their chance."

"Da's jest wha' I was t'inking—let de dibbil hab he swing, tell we can jest put out han' and grab 'em."

"Ay, till we can make him swing—make him swing. But here I lie for the present. Let's have your bag, 'Bram, and see if we can't eat a little—only a little. That hambone has something on it still—something still!"

"Mighty close de knuckle, I tells you," answered 'Bram, bringing forth the remnants from their dinner.

"'Bram," said Ballou, eating vigorously, and speaking with a mouthfull—"to-morrow, by peep of day, you must go down to the camp, and let Captain St. Julien know what we heard about the attack on the Barony. He can trap those three fellows if he pleases—if he pleases;—and he does please, I'm pretty sure! Meanwhile, I'll take the trail after Devil Dick. You can take a short cut through the woods and join me above; I'll break a green bush and throw it, with the stem down the road, every now and then, so that you'll know whether I've passed or not—passed or not! You hear?"

"I yer."

"Very good! But to-night we must separate. Your horse is already in the right place, as you're to canter down to the river, but I must put mine on t'other side of the main road, above, so that I may get a good look at them as they pass. I'll hide the horse deep, so that they can't hear him whinny—whinny—and I'll sleep within ear-shot of the road myself."

"But lie close, Jim Ballou."

"To be sure! I shan't be in their way, and that's the reason I shall cross the road to-night. If I were to hide in these thickets, why, they might cut through and come upon me, and that wouldn't be so pleasant—not so pleasant, 'Bram."

"Mighty onpleasant!"

"'Bram! I've sworn a most stupendous oath!"

"Ki! wha' for you do sich t'ing?"

"Against the flesh and the devil, 'Bram. I had to swear to make myself strong, and I'll keep that oath too, 'Bram—though it's against a good spirit. Did you notice, 'Bram, how these fellows swallowed down that rum. Do you think they relished it!—relished it, 'Bram?"

"Don't 'tink 'bout it, Ballou. I knows dey relishes um better dan dey own souls."

"I'm afraid, 'Bram, I do too. I wished for some of that Jamaica, 'Bram—wish for it now. But I wouldn't touch a drop of it, 'Bram, to save you from the gallows—from the gallows, 'Bram!"

"Ki! you swear 'gin de rum, Ballou!"

"As if it were the devil himself, 'Bram!"

"Nebber git me to swear sich foolish oat' as dat. Rum is good for de healt' and sperrit ob black pusson."

"It will carry you to hell, 'Bram."

"But in a mos' heabbenly way, Ballou."

"Ah! don't I know it, and isn't that the devil's secret, 'Bram—the very devil's secret? But we must part, old fellow—part. You must be off at day-peep. Can you wake?"

"Kin wake whenebber I please, when I aint been 'tosticated de night before."

"Ah! you see how the devil works through rum. But I've sworn against it—sworn—it is an oath, 'Bram. And I swear again. Be a witness. Every witness I have helps my strength."

And he knelt upon the turf, crossed his hands, and repeated the oath he made before Sinclair.

"Look yer, Mass Jim Ballou, tek' care ob you'se'f now. I tell you, man—dis is de night-time, pass de middle o' de night—getting on to day mighty fast, and der's anoder one a-hearing you, 'sides 'Bram."

"Who?"

"De bressed Lord God, dat's jest now a-looking out 'pon we two poor sinners from Heabben."

"It is true—true! God is my witness!" said Ballou, in tones as solemn as those of the negro.

"'Member now, man," said 'Bram—" 'member now!—ef you breaks dat oat'!"

"God help me!—good night, 'Bram."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SCENE CHANGES—NEW PARTIES.

WE are to suppose, for the present, that our scouts, on both sides, are equally prepared and willing to do the duties agreed upon and assigned them; that one set of the outlaws are to haunt the Barony, and watch for their chance, and take advantage of it; that Dick of Tophet, with the Trailer, his associate, is to "take the road" of Sinclair; and that these latter, in return, are to be followed by Ballou and 'Bram, watchful of their chances also, and especially pledged to see that their superior suffers no harm. We are to suppose, farther, that, for the performance of these several duties, the several parties are each excellent in his way; and that there are to be fruits, growing out of the tillage which they are to undertake, the quality of which, affected as all tillage is apt to be by the sort of seasons which the worker enjoys, may be of serious importance to all of these parties, for good or evil. With these points understood, we will leave them for a while, to operate secretly, while we bestow our attention, for a brief space, upon Willie Sinclair, whose movements are destined to bring us to the acquaintance of other parties not yet present in our action.

The guerrilla, or partisan warfare, is necessarily one which can only be characteristic of a very thinly-settled country—one of great intricacies of swamp, forest, or mountain. It involves, from this and the tributary causes, the necessity for a great variety of duties; the warrior becoming, in turn, the scout, the spy, the strategist, as well as the mere man-at-arms and prize-fighter. We may gather from what we have shown already, that Willie Sinclair had, besides, been recently required by the nature of the service, to play the politician as well as spy. He has been actually within the garrisoned city of Charleston

—garrisoned by a strong force of regulars—in the hands of the enemy, to be detected by whom was sure to be followed by short-shrift and sudden cord or shot. Yet he had lain there in close concealment, and in close conference all the while with leading citizens, for no less than three days. His emissaries, meanwhile, had been busy in the parishes along the southern seaboard, operating as far as Savannah, and even within the lines of the garrison—that city being also a stronghold of the British. The results, of great interest and value, contemplating a general rising, which should include both these *termini*, were all within his bosom, matter of life and death, upon which, in some degree, the fate of the war in Carolina—it's prolongation certainly—would greatly depend. We are not, therefore, to feel any surprise to find Willie Sinclair taking the utmost precautions for the safety of his person, as he pursues his way toward the village of Orangeburg, a post of rest for the British, commonly garrisoned by their troops, but at this juncture supposed to be entirely free of their presence, in consequence of the drafts which Lord Rawdon had been compelled to make upon all his garrisoned places, in order to command resources sufficiently large to take the field against the regular army of Greene. Sinclair had nothing, accordingly, to apprehend from this source—for a few days, at least—and his caution was only to be exercised against small bodies of mounted Tories, riflemen, or cavalry, such as were commanded by native partisan rangers, of whom Richard Inglehardt, a person of whom we have had occasion to speak more than once, but whom we have not yet had an opportunity of introducing to our readers, was a very favorable specimen. Now, it was known that, though somewhere about the Edisto, and in the precincts of Orangeburg, Captain Inglehardt had none of his troop with him. A wound in the arm, which had disabled him from active service, had temporarily deprived him of his command, which was operating with Rawdon's cavalry—an arm in which the British general was weak—on the flanks of his army, scouting, foraging, and doing the usual duties of cavalry, though really mounted-riflemen. Still Inglehardt, it was also known, was not sufficiently an invalid to be rendered idle of necessity, and it was understood that he had been doing all the recruiting which

was possible to him, within a limited range along the Edisto. What his success had been in this service—whether he had secured few or many recruits—was a matter wholly unknown to Sinclair, and rendered the utmost care necessary, on his part, in making his approaches to the enemy's ground. He pursued, for this reason, a somewhat circuitous route; and, stopping at Rumph's place, on Turkey hill, to leave a whispered message with a faithful negro, for the ears of his master, with which the latter instantly "*put out*"—knowing very certainly where to find him—Sinclair resumed his progress, and, riding at his leisure, contrived to put himself in the cover of the Cawcaw swamp, a tributary of the Edisto, and within a mile of Orangeburg, just after night had settled down upon the forest. Here he fastened his horse, hiding him away in a thicket which was not easily penetrable, and with pistols carefully reprimed, and his sword and knife convenient to his clutch, he took his way out and upward, making fearlessly for the village.

The pretty little hamlet of Orangeburg, though so situated as to constitute an important *dépôt* and port of rest and watch during the existing war; and the uses of which, in the same way, had been exercised in frequent colonial periods; was yet, at the time of which we write, a very small settlement, numbering somewhat less than two hundred inhabitants, white and black, in very equal numbers. The village lies along the banks of the North Edisto, half a mile from the river. It is neatly laid out, with some regard to regularity, and contained in 1781 several very decent dwellings, according to the notions of that day, and boasted of several well-bred and polished inhabitants; some of whom were comparatively wealthy. The buildings were usually of small size, seldom exceeding two stories, rooms and chambers being on a contracted scale, as is still the case mostly in the southern dwellings of the forest-country. There were two taverns, and perhaps as many lodging-houses for more private accommodation. A proof of the progress of civilization, the jail was one of ample dimensions and adequate strength, and so located as, in the event of necessity, to become a citadel, overawing the settlement. It had been already used for this purpose by the British. There was one great fabric besides—a sort of bazar, the property of good old Christopher

Rowe, formerly an Indian fighter; in later periods a trader with the Red-men, who were wont to assemble in great numbers, Catawbias and Congarees, at his dwelling—the bazar in question—which stood on the angle of a square at the lower entrance of the village. Here he accumulated such stores as the Red-men craved, and received in return their furs and peltries. Here he had amassed a considerable fortune, retiring from war, if not from trade, and holding a position, from age and past performances, which suffered him, in his latter days, to go unscathed by either party during the progress of the Revolutionary feud. But, nearly down to this period, the Indian bazar of the old trader was usually thronged with his wild visitors, to the gratification of the lads of Edisto. Here, under the exciting influence of the strong waters which they too “parlously” loved, they danced and junketed after their grotesque fashion; their rude sports sometimes proving quite as troublesome to their more civilized neighbors—the boys excepted—as they were grateful to themselves. But Kit Rowe, as he was more familiarly known in the precinct, was well aware of the processes by which to tame their humors, and when a quiet suggestion, or an adroit diversion, failed to bring them to order, he did not scruple to soothe them down with an oaken towel—a sort of rule in which the old soldier had no little faith. He had learned excellent lessons of discipline, particularly among the Red-men, from frequent service in the old French and Indian wars along the borders of the Carolinas and Virginia—a region which admirably trained the young colonists of the south for the great contest which was even then in preparation with the mother-country. His commission in the regiment of foot, led by Colonel John Chevillette, is still extant, bearing the date of 1755, and the signature of Governor Glenn, a civilian, whose ambition it was to make a military figure, without the adequate bone and muscle for military boots. But all this is digressive, particularly as our veteran has retired equally from war and trade, and, at the period of our story, was in the enjoyment of a tolerable degree of repose—as much as civil war can possibly allow—under his own vine and fig-tree. His dwelling, one of size as we have said, with sundry warehouses contiguous, was now distinguished by as great a degree of quiet

as it was once noisy with its herds of Red-men. His grounds, stretched down in numerous acres from the outskirts of the village to a considerable distance along the river. One half of this territory lay still in the original forest, and a portion of this was swamp, dense, intricate, and overhung with majestic trees, forming a proper place of harborage for the outlying rebel.

To this harborage, avoiding the village even while compelled to approach it, Willie Sinclair made his way, and when the darkness promised to afford him adequate covering, he stole up to the house of the veteran captain. The latter sat in his piazza—a luxury with which no southern householder willingly dispenses, and on the balaster sat a tankard of Jamaica moderately dashed with simple water. They drank brave draughts in those days, were tough of brain as of muscle; and increased the potency of their potations at those hours when brain and muscle were equally permitted to forego all daily duties. We have reason to think that old Kit Rowe's noggin that night—at that hour—nine, or thereabouts—was of especial flavor. We may add, speaking from authority, that he was already half through it, and was meditating its pleasantness of flavor, in the last toss which he had taken, when his thoughts were suddenly turned into a new and very different channel, by a peculiar whistle on the edge of the wood, west of the dwelling.

He knew all about that whistle, and he answered it—and, just here, a word or two may not be amiss on the subject of the politics of the people in this section of the state. Of this matter, we have already said something at the opening of this narrative—have spoken at large in our historical summary at the beginning;—but it may be proper here to repeat that the Orangeburg precinct was divided in its sentiments with regard to the Revolution, divided quite as much because of principle as policy—that is, so far as the nature of the controversy was understood. But the subject of controversy was not very intelligible to our simple farmers, many of whom were foreigners, speaking no other language than the German, and but few of whom had ever been influenced by any motive prompting the study of this, or any other topic, the knowledge of which could only be gleaned from books. For that matter, when parties

rage, the true points at issue are rarely understood by the people — are rarely *made* before the people by their politicians — and, perhaps, are scarcely necessary to be made. But this aside. Certainly, among our Dutch inhabitants along the Edisto, with certain exceptions, the sentiment, whether for or against the revolutionary movement, was by no means a warm or impassioned one, except among the young men — and they, as usual, were governed mostly by association, by feeling, and not by any conviction of absolute duty, the result of a calm discussion, and a full understanding of the controversy. The older inhabitants accordingly, like Kit Rowe, stood aloof from the issue; and as they had already served their time to the public exigency, their scruples and indifference were regarded with a natural and proper indulgence. Their sons, however, were not so cautious. They were to be found in opposite ranks; though, as rebellion has always a certain charm for young blood, the greater number were with the Revolutionists, and this preponderance as naturally determined the predilections of the aged and infirm. Where they could not take the field themselves, they worked in secret; found refuge for the fugitive, tended his hurts, supplied his wants, furnished counsel and intelligence to the more active, and did good service of which tradition alone preserves the record. Marion encouraged these parties to keep up a friendly intercourse with the British, and reaped the full benefits of this policy.

But enough of this! Enough that good old Kit Rowe understood that signal whistle, answered it, and put another tankard in readiness, with the square Dutch pottle, a good half-gallon receptacle, in near neighborhood of the ample cup from which he was imbibing his own potent draughts.

The coast was clear, and Willie Sinclair soon made his appearance, and joined the old man in the piazza.

“Take it *strong*, major,” said the veteran, pointing to the vessel — “it’s no use to waste good liquor upon thin water; and I reckon you’re off a long day’s ride. The Jamaica *is* good; — nine year-old in this house.”

“A nod’s as good as a wink to a blind horse, captain, and it needs neither nod nor wink to persuade a thirsty one. But our heads are not quite as strong now-a-days, as when you first

studied the laws of drink and discipline, and—what do you think of that?”—showing* the color of the mixture.

“Too thin for service in hot weather and on a long day’s march.”

“’Twill do! ’twont exactly make my accounts square with the world, but it will suffice to bring me round. And how do you carry your shoulders, captain, under the heavy burdens of life?”

“Why, major, life is not a bad thing if you know how to treat it well. I don’t know but I could stand the weight of twenty more years tacked on to mine. I shouldn’t object to taking a jump backward twenty years, for I find, major, that the *got* is not so pleasant as the *getting*; and that it’s in the *use* of life and not the mere *having* it, that we find all the good of it, and I reckon most of the religion too.”

“Ah! if you were twenty years younger, captain, I might hope to see you on a trail now. Then I’d be sure you’d take the field with the best of us, and have a famous dash now and then at these British blackguards.”

“Yes, indeed; and any color of guards. But you’re all getting on very well without me.”

“Ah! how do you know that?”

“I don’t *know* it. Precious little do we get to know in these quiet parts. But I *feel* it. I judge by feeling pretty much, and that brings me intelligence. There’s something in the wind that brings people knowledge of what’s going on elsewhere. There’s *signs* that you can’t see, that you only feel, that help you to judge of the doings of the world. Now, though I don’t hear a syllable of what’s doing between the two armies, until it’s all over, yet I feel sure that the British are agoing backward. It’s strange that I feel so certain; but I’ve always found a sort of—what do you call it—a sort of instinct, that seemed to tell me what was to happen whenever the affair was a great one, and likely to do us hurt, or give us help—to please us or to trouble us. And just now, I’m as confident of our gains, as if I had it from the best authority. Yet the last news was that Rawdon was driving Greene before him, as a drunken jockey drives a fast trotter; and didn’t I see with my own eyes, his three brand-new Irish regiments that he marched through the village with from Charleston.”

"You are right. We are gaining ground; and it will not be long before you see his lordship back with his new regiments a little reduced in flesh and and spirit as in numbers."

"They have it hot enough for long marching now. It's been all day like blazes in the sky."

"We shall probably have some fighting under your own eyes before long. Greene has turned about upon Rawdon, and is in pursuit of him in turn."

And a long talk ensued between the two, in which Sinclair recounted all those events, in the relative progress of the two armies, which the other had not heard.

"And now, captain, touching matters more near home. Is Inglehardt still about the village?"

"He keeps his quarters there?"

"Where? at whose house?"

"Widow Bruce's, as you might have guessed."

"True, so stout a loyalist as she is, with such a profound faith in the graces and virtues of George the Third, must have possessed infinite attractions for so good a subject. But, while I can understand how he should desire to lodge with her, I do not see why she should accommodate him. She is such an aristocrat that, I fancied, even a good loyalist, unless backed by the *prestige* of an ancient family, would hardly persuade her to receive him. Besides, she's well off, and in receiving lodgers, has usually admitted those only who could assert their dignities without regard to their merits."

"Oh! it's all owing to the times. Everything's in such confusion now, that people who have got money need friends of all sorts, just to help them to keep it. Widow Bruce is more civil and condescending now than she was, and she takes in the drover's son, who is captain of mounted men, and never troubles his pride by telling him how often she has seen his dad, barelegged, driving his steers to market."

"Has he recovered from his wound?"

"Pretty much. It's a little stiffish, I reckon; but he's able to use it. I saw him not three days ago on horseback, and he used the wounded arm without any trouble that I could see."

"How has he got on recruiting along the river?"

"Well, I reckon the chance for him was small. He haint

picked up many, and the few he's got ar'n't of much account. But he's got some, and I reckon he'll keep 'em about him. If he didn't, there's enough about the village, at times—now that he's got over his wounds—to make a dash, and carry him off. But don't you risk a good deal, major, to be coming here single-handed, just about this time?"

No! I think not. I keep close, trust nobody, feel my way, have weapon ready, and my horse harbors close at hand in the swamp."

"The famous black! Ah! he's a beauty, and deserves a dragoon's confidence! But take care! There's some about Orangeburg that don't love any of your blood, and would make no bones of butchering you, or selling you to Inglehardt, for the weight of one of your buttons in gold. I reckon you are satisfied that Inglehardt would like no better trade than to buy you at any price."

"Ah! you think so?"

"Yes, indeed! If he knows as much as I do—if he knew as well as me, how often you get up to Holly-Dale!"

"I suspect, my good old friend, that he knows quite enough to feel no good will for me; I shall accordingly try to keep out of his clutches while I can."

"But, major, is it not rather a strange way to keep out of his clutches, by coming, as I may say, almost into 'em?"

"No doubt, could he see or suspect my presence."

"But he's all suspicion, major. He's the coldest, cunningest slyest, most suspicious person you ever did see, and wonderfully smart. He guesses at a thing sooner than any man I ever knew. And he has his spies all about. And he's merciless when he gets the whip-hand of you. Now, there would be no chance for *you*, if he once had you in his power; and he'll get you there, as sure as flint and steel, if you trust anything to Captain Travis."

"*That* is the chief danger, captain; and it so happens that I must trust to Travis. I have business with him; must see him; must risk something to do so; and must, in some degree, rely upon his word."

"Then let me just say one thing: keep knife and pistols ready when you meet him; and, at the first wink of mischief,

out with steel and bullet and pitch into him, savage as an Indian when he wants to feel the hair. There's no way else. Travis is in and out of the village every day. Take him on the roadside, and when he's had no chance to set his traps for you. That's the way. You can find out if he comes into the village to-morrow. It'll be soon after breakfast if he does. Then waylay him and have your talk out in the bushes. I know how you feel toward his daughter Bertha, and she's a girl that's a sort of beautiful apology for a bad father, but I can't help telling you just what I know is the truth. Beware of the father, whatever you may feel for the child!"

We need not pursue this conversation, though the parties did till a tolerably late hour, when Willie Sinclair, in spite of the old man's invitation, took refuge in the swamp with his horse, to whom he carried out an armful of fodder and a sack of corn. We need scarcely state that Kit Rowe gave the major a good supper, though at a late hour, which was washed down with a fresh stoup of Jamaica, when the young man was again exhorted to *take it strong*, as a security against the night air. We do not say that he neglected the injunction. There were some small matters of business, relating to the war, transacted between them, which do not need more particular mention, and the night had sped on to the small hours ere they separated. At dawn, Willie Sinclair had crossed the river, at the bridge, just below the village, and had planted himself in waiting, close in the thicket, but near enough to watch the river-road from above, taking Kit Rowe's counsel to intercept Travis without notice, and in a spot where, if his purposes were treacherous, he could possess no agencies, other than his own, for putting them in execution.

CHAPTER XXV.

“COURSE OF TRUE LOVE.”

“Most acceptably come!
The art of number can not count the hours
Thou hast been absent.”—MIDDLETON.

THOUGH prepared to wait patiently, for the appearance of the party whom he sought, Willie Sinclair was by no means prepared to wait in vain. But such was his luck on this occasion. Fastening his good steed in the deep thickets which spread between the road and river, he put himself in position, so as to watch the former from a spot where he himself might lie unseen. By nature, he was not a person of very patient temperament. His blood coursed freely and impetuously in his veins. His moods were all ardent. He lived properly in action. But he had somewhat schooled this nature, and partisan warfare is of an admirable sort to assist in the proper training. A few awkward little reverses, some surprises, and narrow escapes, at the beginning of the war, had been of great service to our young major, as to most of the partisan gentry of the country, in curbing their natural impatience of character, and quieting their impulses to more staid paces. Willie Sinclair had learned something of that grand and necessary lesson—so essential to all progress and development—so particularly essential to success in everything—to wait!

“Patience and shuffle the cards,” he muttered, after he had lingered for an hour in the same spot; and he crossed to the opposite side for relief. But another hour passed unprofitably, and another. The sun, meanwhile, rose high in heaven. The winds were hushed. It was one of those terribly clear days in midsummer, when the sun rules with despotic sway; when the eye looks up vainly for a friendly cloud to interpose; when the

air is glittering with quivering motes, in that incessant motion which pains the sense to behold; and when the brain seems to reel and burn in sympathy with the hot glare and vibratory motion of the firmament. Where Sinclair watched, there was no need of shelter from the sun. Never was guardian shade more sure and solemn, than in those deep thickets. Great stalwart pines rose up out of a dense wilderness of undergrowth; cedars and scrubby oaks—a thousand varieties—all seemed struggling forward to crowd every interval of space, stretching upward as emulous of every ray of light, while, like the roofs of great cathedrals, of grand and delicate tracery, the broad branches of the pine stretched overhead, interlaced, linking arms, twining mazily together, and spreading great shields, as it were, above and abroad, so as to deny the smallest shaft of sunlight the privilege to strike below.

But, if thus sheltered from the glare, the region below was equally sheltered from the breeze. Not a breath could penetrate that sombrous and silent sanctuary. Not a leaf trembled under the pulsing pressure of the zephyr. It grew to be stifling hot, and our lurking major felt it necessary to change his position frequently, to escape the feeling of faintness which became too oppressive for endurance.

But change of position brought no relief. Even military patience could endure it no longer. He had now waited for more than four mortal hours, and in vain. He had seen no human being—nay, not even a squirrel. It was a time, it must be remembered, when the condition of the country, under the ravenous consumption of both armies, was approaching famine; and every beast of the forest, that could be made the prey of hunger, fell a victim to the insatiate appetites of a half-starving population. Squirrels and rabbits are rarely eaten in the south, and they multiply amazingly at ordinary periods. But now, if you beheld a squirrel, he was a disconsolate, wearing mourning for his tribe! He looked like one who felt his desolation. You might see him at sunset sitting melancholy upon the top of some rotten tree, musing sadly upon the prospect, like Caius Marius among the ruins of Carthage. We may surely forgive the impatience of our hero, if it grew restiff after four hours

of watch, in such a region, and under such circumstances of heat and solitude.

Besides, it must not be forgotten that he was but a mile or two from Holly-Dale, and Holly-Dale was the home of Bertha Travis—that damsel of whom we have heard something already, of whom we shall know more presently, and of whom the memories, in the heart and brain of brave Willie Sinclair, were at once perpetually active and deliciously exciting.

Our major of dragoons was as brave a soldier, as ever smiled upon a broadsword; but he was as fond a lover as ever buckled a fair woman, like a belt of beauty, to his bosom. He was not, it is true, a soft sentimental cavalier; but he was an earnest and very passionate one. Love with him was not a mere sentiment. It was a necessity and a life. It was no small trial of his strength to require him to wait and watch for hours, when within a few bounds of the home where his beauty harbored; and it was no small sacrifice which he made to a patriotic policy, those four hours which he denied to love.

He could deny the tender interest no longer. Concluding that Captain Travis was not to visit Orangeburg that day, he resolved to seek him at home. He *must* seek him—*must* meet him—that day or the next; and this now seemed the only proper process for doing so, whatever might be the peril which it would involve.

He felt that Kit Rowe was right. He felt that there was peril. Travis, though the father of Bertha, was not one in whom faith might be put easily. He was a man who notoriously acknowledged no considerations superior to those of self. He was greedy of gain; eager for power, cringing when feeble, despotic when assured and strong; altogether, a man totally deficient in the magnanimous virtues. He was, besides, smooth and subtle; scrupling at no arts, to be secured by no pledges, when he might gratify any of his leading passions. Willie Sinclair well knew that there was but one method of securing and making him steadfast; and that was by making it his policy to be so. He fancied that he had the means to do this; and that, in fact, he had done something toward it already. But for this, he never would have periled himself, alone, in the precincts of one bearing such a character, and

very well known to be in the actual employment of the British commandant of Charleston.

But Sinclair dismissed all his doubts as, mounting his horse, he took the way to Holly-Dale.

This beautiful little plantation retreat lay on the west side of the north branch of the river Edisto, but a few miles above Orangeburg. It contained about a thousand acres, some two hundred of which were in swamp. But a small portion of the tract, speaking comparatively, had been cleared. The produce was corn, indigo, and tobacco, cultivated by some twenty slaves. We may here mention, however, that Travis possessed a much larger number of slaves which he had contrived to secrete beyond the Santee, and to cover under the name of his wife's sister—an old maid in whom he entertained the most perfect confidence. He was thus, in some degree, secured against the vicissitudes of the war. But he did not feel himself quite secure, and he had in view even larger operations, chiefly upon British resources, which kept him perpetually scheming. If the British triumphed, he contemplated the valuable lands and chattels of certain estates, the confiscation of which was certain. If they succumbed to the revolutionists, there were still some processes by which to fleece them before they evacuated the country. And, whatever the final result, it was still necessary to his securities that he should drive a bargain with the *rebel* authorities. He could give the *quid*—such was his assurance to Willie Sinclair—for any favors which the revolutionists could bestow.

But we need not anticipate!

The approaches to Holly-Dale, whether from above or below, conducted you through long, dark, silent avenues of the natural forest, to within three hundred yards of the grounds and dwelling-house. This building, a comfortable frame-work of two stories on a basement, divided in the centre by a great passage, faced south and west, with a piazza running along in front; a wing at each extremity afforded two pleasant guest-chambers. The house was not more than a short quarter of a mile from the river, but a pleasant wood between, of massive old trees, shut the latter out from sight. The ridge upon which the dwelling stood, was considerably above the general

level of the plantation, and gradually narrowed to a promontory—a goodly bluff upon the river—the land on either side rapidly sloping away till it subsided into dense swamp; a vast thicket, thoroughly massed with foliage, through which, in times of freshet, the river swept unobstructed, and which, at all times, was penetrated by its tributary waters, creeks, lagunes, ponds, rendering it wholly irreclaimable. The ridge occupied by the settlement, being sandy, bore among its more massive forest trees, numerous groups of the holly, and hence the name given to the place. Suppose the usual outhouses of a well-ordered settlement, worm fences enclosing remoter fields, and neat white palings circumscribing gardens, over which white and red roses clambered at pleasure, smiling, like loving idiots, at all comers, and we may be content with thus much said by way of description.

Our major of dragoons was not forgetful of his caution. As he knew not whom it might be his fortune to encounter at the house, he proceeded with due circumspection; and, stabling his horse in the thickets, advanced on foot toward the open grounds. When he reached the immediate bounds of the settlement, he turned to the right, and made his way to the bluff upon the river. Stealing from tree to tree, he at length gained the banks, and looked out upon the stream, which rolled along placidly, bright as a silver serpent in the sunshine. At the distance of a hundred yards above, a little dugout—a canoe hollowed, Indian fashion, from a cypress—rested lazily upon the water, half shaded by overhanging trees. In this sat a youth, not more than fourteen or fifteen, fishing for blue-cat and perch. You have never eaten the blue-cat of the Edisto, gentle reader—or you have?—in either case you have something to live for. The blue-cat of the Edisto is one of the nicest fish that swims, tender as young love, white as maiden purity, delicate as a dream of innocence, satisfactory as a capital prize in the lottery, to one who has spent his last dollar in the selfish business of feeding hunger and clothing nakedness. Take an Edisto cat in July if you can—boil, of course—use as little dressing as possible, beyond the melted butter; eschew all fish-sauces, whatever their supposed virtues, and reconcile yourself, with all despatch, to a world which is still capable of such goodly productions.

Our young fisherman was evidently earning his dinner. Sinclair stole down the bluff, wormed his way into the swamp, and, unheard, unseen, crept out to the banks not a dozen yards from the canoe.

"Henry!" he called.

The boy was in the act of taking a perch—a goodly subject for such treatment as Saint Dominic bestowed on heretics. The red-belly perch of the Edisto is not one of its aldermen, but it is nevertheless a good citizen—well to do in the waters—armed to make himself respected where he goes; and, not unwilling to take off his armor, when the fight is done, and suffer himself to be properly dressed for company and table. You may use your fish-sauces upon *him*. His delicacy does not revolt at strong condiments. In that respect, there is but little sympathy between himself and the azure cat, his neighbor.

The boy had just taken one of these goodly perch from the waters, when his name was called, in low tones, but sufficiently loud to reach his ears. He knew the voice, dropped the fish into the boat, and turned about, all in the twinkling of an eye, to face the summoner.

"Who is it?"

Then, as if he saw through all disguises, he cried out in a voice, a little sharper and shriller than was absolutely essential to the occasion:—

"Major Willie! is it you? Oh! I'm so glad to see you!"

The canoe was put about for the shore in a moment, and the boy was soon clasped in the arms of his military friend. Verily, a tall and goodly boy was he, with a sunbrowned, but frank, ingenuous face, and a fine dark, sparkling eye, full of intelligence and life.

"And how's all, Henry?"

"Well, well—all well."

"And Bertha!"

"Oh! she's well too; but she's not in a good humor. She's been cross to me of late. Won't do anything I ask her. It's all owing, Major Willie, to your not coming when you promised."

The major laughed merrily.

"But I'm come now, Henry, and we'll see if Bertha's humors will improve."

“Oh! when I say she’s been cross, Major Willie, I don’t mean *that* exactly. She’s only been forgetful, and don’t mind what I say, and *don’t* do what I ask her. There, it’s a week since she was to make my lines for me—yet see what I have to fish with now—old cotton strings so rotten that a good big fish would snap ’em all to pieces—and I do think she’s never thought of them since. And you don’t know how much I want ’em. The fish are now biting famously. See what I’ve caught in an hour. Three fine cat, seven perch, and two jackfish, in an hour—less than an hour; and if I had come out at sunrise, I might have caught twice as many; and if I come about sunset, I’ll be sure to do so. The river is just right now, Major Willie—low enough—”

“And warm enough!”

“That it is,” answered the boy, wiping the sweat from his brow—“But you’re well, Major Willie? You’re not wounded? Have you had any more fighting? Oh! I so want to see you a-fighting—in a charge, with that brave black horse! Where’s the black, Major Willie—you haven’t had him shot? He isn’t killed or hurt? Where is he now?”

The queries of the boy poured out in a flood. Sinclair tried to answer them all.

“No!” he said, “the black is as brave and sound as ever; I’m not hurt, as you see; we have had some little skirmishing, but nothing much; and, as for your seeing a fight, Henry, I wish you were only ten years older, that you might try your own broadsword in it, and strike, side by side with me, in a charge upon the redcoats.”

“Ha! wouldn’t I then? How I would cut right and left! Hurrah! hurrah! How I could make ’em skip!”

And the boy yelled with the exciting idea. Sinclair put his hands on his mouth.

“Sh!—sh! A good partisan, Henry, waits for the moment of charge for giving the war-whoop! At all other times, his rule is to know first who may be listening. For we never give the ‘hurrah’ till the broadsword is flashing in the air, and we are ready to smite with it, over the shoulders of the enemy.”

“Oh! there’s nobody here now, Major Willie. You’re quite safe.”

"Where's your father?"

"In Orangeburg. He went over yesterday, and didn't come back last night—won't come back, I reckon, till to-night."

"Ah!—but mother and sister are both at home, and quite well! There's been no trouble, Henry."

"Not a bit! Oh! not a bit! All's so dull at home! We never see, nor hear anything hardly of the fighting, for father keeps a close tongue. Oh! he is so close—so shy of his words;—and then mother don't *want* to hear of the war—and *sis* is afraid to hear! It is so dull, Major Willie, that I wish you'd beg for me, and carry me off somewhere, where I could see something, and learn to do a little of the fighting myself. Why, I can't even try my gun. Father says powder's too scarce, and there's nothing to shoot; and that's true—there's no seeing even a squirrel;—and father's hid my gun in his own room. He says people would take it away from me. But would they, do you think, Major Willie, if I had a good load in it, and had only time enough to draw sight? I'd like 'em to try it!"

"Why, you are, indeed, cut off from all resources, Henry."

"Isn't it too bad, Major Willie? And there's *sis* too, that don't even try to please me, and don't make my lines, though she promised me. And—"

"Henry!" at that moment, soft and musical, yet full and clear as a silver bell, sounding over a mountain-lake, was the call of a voice from the edge of the highlands.

"That's Bertha now!" murmured Willie Sinclair.

"Yes! it's *sis*! I wonder what she wants." And he shouted in reply, and, immediately afterward, darted through the swamp, calling to Sinclair to follow him. This the latter did, with almost as little deliberation as the boy, though with far more difficulty. The latter leaped lightly, and knew the way; the large frame of our major of dragoons rendered the task of rapid progress through the undergrowth a much more serious one to him. But he scrambled through after a fashion; and, with the frank, heartfelt ardor of an honest love, prepared to ascend the little elevation upon which the damsel stood awaiting his approach.

Was Bertha Travis a beauty? It is enough that Willie Sinclair thought so. She was certainly such a creature as

would compel admiration in any circle; of fine shape, medium size, graceful movement, and dignified yet eager carriage. Her figure was slight, yet sweetly rounded. Her eyes were at once dark and brilliant. Her cheek was somewhat pale ordinarily. It now wore a delicate flush which might be due to a brisk walk from the dwelling to the bluff, in that ardent summer's day; but was, in all probability, the fruit of the unexpected encounter with her lover. Such an event is well calculated to bring the blood of a young fond heart out upon the cheek.

“See who's come, sis!” cried the boy, beckoning to Sinclair — “see whom I've brought you, sis! It's Major Willie, in spite of the homespun hunting-shirt.”

“He has been reproaching you, Bertha,” cried Sinclair, as he ascended the bluff.

“Ah!” exclaimed Henry, “but I was wrong. See, she has done the lines and brought them. She's a good little sister after all.”

He took the lines from her hand while speaking. She remained silent.

“Bertha!” said Sinclair, clasping her hand in his own; “we meet once more.”

“You are safe, Willie, quite safe?”

“Yes; unhurt, and only much wearied. I have had a hard travel, in an anxious quest, and come for solace. Can you give it me? Here you have peace? Shall I say love also?”

She looked at him very earnestly, and he now detected, mingling with a deep shade of sadness upon her cheek, an expression of reserve and caution in her eye. There was something of a trembling motion in her lips which arrested his observation, and made him feel that something had gone wrong.

He turned from her to the brother and said:—

“Go, try your new lines, Henry, while Bertha and I talk of our own affairs.”

The boy laughed consciously and merrily, and said:—

“It's almost too late for much sport now. The fish will be slow to bite till toward sundown; but I know you never want me when you can have sis; and so, I'm off. Call me when you get tired of your own talk. I'll be in the boat.”

"Sensible boy," said Sinclair quietly, as the lad trotted down into the swamp. When he was fairly gone, the lover said, possessing himself of Bertha's hand:—

"What troubles you, Bertha? I do not misunderstand the signs in your eye, and upon your face. You are grave, sad—something has happened to disquiet you; but nothing, I trust, dear Bertha, to make you doubtful of, or displeased with me."

She released to him the hand without scruple, and he pressed it warmly in his own. A moment after she replied frankly, and with all that sweet natural impulse which shows the true heart, untouched and untrammelled by convention.

"No, Willie; it is scarce possible that *you* should ever displease me; and I have no doubt of your truth and love! If I had, I should not linger with you a moment. But I confess to doubts and anxieties of my own, Willie, that make me unhappy—unhappy, even in the possession of your love."

"What! why is this? What has happened, Bertha, to occasion these perplexities?"

"Willie, you must speak to me honestly and truly, as you can! You shall know all that troubles me; and I shall be too glad, Willie, if you can relieve me of my fears and anxieties. I do not wish to doubt, or fear, or feel anxious, in any way, where your love is the subject. I have given you all my heart. I need all of yours; and it would be the greatest of miseries and disappointments to me, dear Willie, if anything should happen to make me feel that I ought not to wish you mine, or to keep your pledges that you would make me yours."

She paused and looked most sweetly into his full eyes. He saw that her troubles were really felt, and no mere lover-anxieties, such as idleness and loneliness will breed.

"Why, dear heart, you alarm me! What can have caused these doubts, these misgivings? Tell me all—hide nothing! Has that subtle and treacherous Richard Inglehardt been at work, to make you fearful?"

Oh! *his* working should never occasion doubt or fear in my heart; least of all could word of his, or any one, affect my trust in you. It is not that, but something of a far different kind."

"And what is it, my own Bertha?"

"I know not how to speak, Willie:—it is of so difficult a

nature ; yet”—desperately—“I must ! It must be spoken, Willie, for if I have given you up all my heart, I have not given up my pride ; and if I am to bear your name, Willie, I must not feel, or suffer any one to feel or think, that I am not worthy of it.”

“Oh ! who can think or speak thus, dear Bertha ? Speak ! tell me frankly of your cause of trouble. Do not keep me in suspense.”

She sighed deeply, and looked mournfully into his eyes. He would have drawn her to his bosom, but she resisted firmly, saying, “No, Willie—no !”

But he repossessed himself of one of her hands, and his arm half circled her waist ; and thus they stood, side by side, beneath the sheltering boughs of an ancient water-oak. And thus they stood silent for a while ;—she, at least, silent, while he only interrupted the interval by entreating her full speech. He was now sufficiently anxious himself, showing more of the tender lover than altogether be seemed the rustic garb he wore, and his sanguinary profession.

“Henry said you were sad and suffering, Bertha—at least I gathered thus much from what he did say—but I fondly fancied that your griefs grew from my absence, as all that I suffer, at any time, is due to yours. But that there should be any serious cause of disquiet—that you should feel, or fear, my love to be a snare to your pride or sensibilities—I never thought or dreaded *that*, Bertha.”

“Nor is it, Willie. Of you I have no fear—no doubt :—for you, I have but one feeling, and that one is the very life to my heart ; but——”

“And for whom else should you care ?” he exclaimed, almost fiercely ; but she stopped him, laying one hand on his arm, and withdrawing, at the same time, from his embrace. She had now evidently nerved herself to a difficult task, and her eyes met his firmly as she lifted up her face. Her love was a very artless, ingenuous passion, and betrayed itself without reserve. In such cases, the pain is in the thought of giving pain. Bertha knew that what she was about to say must do this. Her preliminaries were instinctively designed to strengthen herself and to mollify the annoyance she was compelled to inflict. He

gazed in her sweet, sad, but ingenuous eyes, and subdued himself to patience, as he urged her tenderly to proceed.

"Willie, dear Willie, you know even better than I what difference exists in the several ranks of our society. Now, you know, that mine is comparatively of humble stock; and though my mother comes of good family in the Low country, yet, in marrying my father, who was an obscure Indian trader, she incurred the reproach and anger of her own kindred. They neglected, and finally cast her off."

"*She* was as good and noble as any of them."

"Yes, but in such cases, it seems, the wife sinks to the husband's rank, and loses something of her own. But be patient and hear me. It is a fact to be remembered, however, that they cast her off. Their reasons for this cruelty were to be found in this difficulty of social caste. The career of my father has not been pursued in such walks as could restore her to position; and you perhaps know that, even along the Edisto, there are many who do not hold my father of like rank with themselves——"

"Pshaw, Bertha, who shall cure conceit of its folly? and how great must be *his* folly who shall attempt it! These distinctions *here* are ridiculous enough."

"Patiently, dear Willie. You must know, too, that it is one of my poor father's weaknesses to desire, above all things, to conciliate the favor of the great—to take rank among the very people who despise his humble beginnings, and who, at best, when they make concessions, only tolerate those whom they fear, or whom they wish to use for some selfish or slavish policy. To me, the favor of such people is a thing of no moment. I do not despise it, but I would not seek it. Favor, friendship, love, must all come from natural sympathies, or they hide a falsehood at the core, and I care for no sympathies that are not free gifts of the heart—that the heart is compelled to purchase."

"And you are right, my Bertha. In this lies the whole secret and security of the affections. Have I ever taught otherwise? Do I desire less for you—offer less to you? To what, dear Bertha, do all these expressions tend?"

"Do not be impatient, dear Willie. I have so much to say, that I know not well how to say it."

"Let us sit, Bertha—there, in the shade of those cedars on the slope of the hill. The day is so warm; but a little breeze, rising from the river, sweeps up the slope. Let us sit, and we can talk more easily."

And he led her down the slope, and found for her a shady spot upon the dry leaves that strewed the earth. After a brief pause, she resumed:—

"I have not been kept in ignorance, dear Willie, of the differences of rank in society, which draw a line between my own and the more distinguished families in our county. I know my father's history—his humble rise, his poverty at first, all his necessities, and that the trade which he pursued with the Indians, was held in scorn by our wealthy planters. My mother, brought up in these very prejudices, was quite aware of their operation upon her own position when she married my father, and she has not suffered me to remain in ignorance. But, until recently, I never suffered them to disturb me, or to occasion any doubts of my own security in my mind."

"And why should they now, Bertha?"

"You shall hear in time. When you became known to me, Willie, and I found, and showed the pleasure which I found in seeing you, my mother warned me that your family was a very proud one, of great wealth, of old rank, and bade me be cautious how I suffered you to see that I loved you. But I did not then feel or fear her warnings. I had no caution, Willie; I only felt happy when you came, happier when you spoke to me kindly, and very unhappy when you went. I am afraid, dear Willie, that I suffered you to see this as soon as my dear mother saw it."

"And if you did, sweet Bertha, it only served to make another heart as happy as your own. Was there harm or loss to you, my love, in such heedless policy. Nay, was there ever more politic counsellor for love than the fond confidence which begets a love like its own, and is never so successful as when it delivers itself blindly to the faith which it feels. Why should you repent this heedlessness, Bertha? I have never trespassed upon, never abused it. It won back all that it gave—as

much as it gave—and unless you have learned to question my truth, dear Bertha, you have lost nothing, incurred no peril—only put out your affections at interest, in a sweet traffic of affections which have brought in rare profits—have doubled your original capital. You see, my sweet, that I too can talk in the language of trade, even in the affairs of the heart.”

“Willie, I believe you. It is all true. But this is not all. As I was saying, I was counselled that my family held no such rank as yours in society; that we were obscure and humble; that your family was proud among the proudest; mine just rising from the dust. My mother spoke of all these distinctions too clearly to leave me in any doubt. And she did not undervalue me in her eyes, or disparage me to my own, when she told me that I was but a simple country-girl, having no experience of life among the great, ignorant of much that they know, artless, unsophisticated, too believing, too confiding, and with nothing to commend me, Willie, but a pretty face—and a true heart.”

He caught her to his bosom as she spoke.

“What more! What more!” he cried—“did I ever lead you to think, my Bertha, that the heart of Willie Sinclair longed for more?”

“No, Willie; and, so far as you are concerned, I repent not that you have caught me in your arms—I sigh not because your kisses have been sweet upon my lips. They have been very sweet to me, Willie. They have filled my heart with a new life—a joy—that it never knew until I breathed under your love. Ah! Willie, is not this enough for confession! See how free I am of speech. And against this, mother warned me also. She knew that my lips still spoke as my heart felt, and she shook her head in frequent warning. But I loved you from the first, Willie, and it was so sweet, so easy to tell you so. I could die for you, Willie, and never feel the pain; and why shouldn’t I tell you so.”

“Why not, indeed!” he murmured, looking into her eyes, the tearful tenderness which he felt.”

“And I told you so—and I gave you all my heart—and I told mother all that I had said and done, and she sighed to hear it, and had her misgivings still—but she approved when

she came to know you well—and her hopes grew with my own of happiness. Do I tire you, Willie?"

"No! no! It is so much music that I seem to dream. I could listen to you for ever, Bertha."

"And we were betrothed. Ah! Willie. I shall never forget the trembling happiness of that moment when you wrapped me in your first embrace, and I felt as if I were dying in your arms, but without any of the pang or fear of death. We were betrothed, and it seemed to me as if the world was mine, with all its moonlight, and flowers, and sweet breezes. It was a child heart that I gave you, Willie, having a perfect confidence in all the beauties and blessings of this world, and taking them all as your gift and yours only. Was it not all very foolish of me, Willie, so to think and feel?"

"Foolish, Bertha! This is the very wisdom of the heart. The child is apt to be wiser than the man. It is the faith, after all and before all, the generous gift of confidence, the implicit trust that believes only where it loves, and loves to believe, that makes the true virtue in love, and renders it the most precious of all earthly possessions—nay, more than earthly—makes it a thing heavenly, akin to all that is precious in immortality. Ah! Bertha, if you should outgrow this child heart!"

"That is the new pain that troubles me, Willie. My father knew of our engagement, my mother told him all; and, though he warned us all to secrecy, he yet approved; nay, Willie, I must tell you, he was very proud of it—it promised to help him to the social position for which he had so much yearned. He said to me, 'The Sinclairs are among our first families—rich, popular, distinguished'—but this did not lift my heart in pride. No, Willie, if I felt pride at all, it was only in the *one* Sinclair whom I so loved to think my own—my own."

Ah! flatterer!—But did your father say why he enjoined you to secrecy?"

"Not exactly; but we gathered enough from what he did say to learn that he was particularly anxious that it should not get to the ears of Richard Inglehardt."

"Ah! as I thought!"

"But why—what is Inglehardt to him or to me?"

"Of that hereafter, Bertha! We are still far off from the thing that troubles you."

"Oh! Willie, I wish I could not tell you that! But I must tell it. There must be nothing in my bosom, which I should seek to shelter or to keep from you."

"Speak fearlessly, dear Bertha."

"Well, my father, without saying a word to us, went down to see your father, and came back to us in a perfect rage. At first, he said, that there should be no engagement between us; that there was an impassable wall between us—that your father had grossly insulted him—that he had treated him like a dog—that your sister was the haughtiest woman breathing—that she had not noticed him at all, or so contemptuously, that every word, and every look was an insult;—that, speaking of you, Colonel Sinclair told him that the subject was not one proper to his mouth; that there could be *no* circumstances which should justify him in adverting to you at all; and when, it seems, my father mentioned, as delicately as possible, your attentions to me, then, that your father broke out in the wildest rage, and said that the whole suggestion was a lie, and that his son could never so much demean himself, as to think of the daughter of an Indian trader. My father, in his fury—for I never saw him half so roused before—said that he didn't tell us half the insults to which he submitted; and, at the time, he forbade that I should think any more of you."

"But he has thought differently since, Bertha—has spoken differently?" said Sinclair with a sad interest in his look.

"Oh! yes! But Willie, this makes no difference to *me*! Shall I enter a family which scorns me—which holds my family in scorn—which treats my father with contempt and abuse—which wrongs the family of my mother—and makes my very affections for you the means by which to do them dishonor?"

"My own dear Bertha! This has come upon me prematurely. All that you have said about my family rank and wealth is undoubtedly true; all that you have said of the too frequently idle distinctions of caste prevailing in our social world, is also true, unhappily. Col. Sinclair, my father, is by nature and education, a proud and haughty person. He is also a man of violent passions when under provocation; full of false

notions of blood, and the victim of many prejudices. But he is one who means to be just, and all his instincts are honorable, and all his sympathies are true. Forgive me now, if I say that your father committed a very serious error, if not offence, in broaching to a father—and such a father—a subject, of so delicate a nature, concerning his son, of which the son himself had never spoken. My father felt that such a communication should never have been first made by a stranger. This did me harm with him. You are not now to be told that my father is a loyalist. As such, he holds my course with the patriotic party, to be monstrous and criminal. We see each other but seldom now. Until recently, we have not exchanged a syllable for months. Your father anticipated me, and thus prejudiced my argument. I *had*—I confess to you—and *believe*—a difficult task to perform, in overcoming the prejudices of a life, in the mind of an old man, suffering from a painful chronic disease, and so irritable, in consequence, that the very opening of a subject to him which threatens to disturb old opinions, is calculated of itself to irritate. Your father finds him in this condition of mind and body, and—without any preparation—without any consideration of the condition of the subject—without even respecting his political prejudices—knowing too that Colonel Sinclair had personal prejudices against himself growing out of affairs that happened when the two served together in the war against the Cherokees—he bluntly proposes a sort of trade, your heart and mine being articles of certain value to be set off against the claims of the British crown—claims which, to an old loyalist, were paramount to all other considerations.”

“Did my father do this?”

“So I gather from the spasmodic and angry speeches of my father, and from the partial report of my sister.”

“And that sister, Willie? Is she so proud, so haughty, so scornful of the humble name of Bertha Travis?”

“Carrie Sinclair! Oh! how little you know that sister from the report of your father. She knew nothing of his real mission till he was gone. She heard of him only as a British commissariat, seeking to contract with my father, for a hundred head of beeves for the Charleston garrison. Nay, there was a contract, and the beeves furnished, and it was only when

the contract was executed, that your father broached the subject of our intimacy to mine. This was after Carrie Sinclair had retired from the table. Her conduct was, I will venture to say, only what yours would have been under the same circumstances. You come down to dinner and find a stranger, of whom you know nothing, seeking cattle, and you are civil to him as a lady at your own table, but reserved, and not disposed to encourage familiarity or approach. This was all. In your father's eagerness to attain an object, he overlooked all its difficulties, never sought to anticipate them, rushed at them impetuously, and was baffled."

"Ah! but, Willie, the prejudice is still there. How can I enter a family which looks upon the approach of mine—its alliance—with aversion?"

"Bertha, my love, I am not aware that God, among his many mercies, has ever guarantied to man a perfect success and facility in the prosecution of any of his objects. This, which is true of all objects of human desire, is said to be particularly true of the affections. The great poet, Shakspeare, whom, I trust, I have taught you to love and venerate, and to study, has especially insisted upon such unavoidable, nay, necessary obstacles, in love, and in love too which is most distinguished by its sincerity. Crafty love, bargain and sale love, trading and selfish love, calculating and conniving love, are all much more likely than sincere, deep, profound honest love, to attain their ends; for the simple reason that their ends are all meaner, more vulgar, more common, depending upon arts and interests, of a character not more noble than the driving of a clever bargain. It is *true* love whose course does *not* run smoothly, and I do not know, dear Bertha, that it lessens the value of the commodity that its impediments are so great and many! I never disguised from you the fact that there were impediments—nay, prejudices, of all kinds the worst—to be overcome. But I told you they *should* be overcome, dear Bertha, and I begged you to *have faith in me*. What shall I, or can I, say more? Suppose I should fail to overcome the prejudices of my father—suppose that he persists in his blindness and determined hostility to the real interests of my heart—is love thereby baffled, my Bertha? Will love submit to take its law

from blindness and prejudice, and unreasonable obstinacy? Heaven forbid? Though Heaven requires that its waters shall not flow smoothly, it does not require that they shall be dammed up: nay, dear heart, it provides the obstacles, and opposes the current, and drives it back, only the better to test its strength and honesty—only that it may acquire the necessary force to break down all barriers, and assert over all in triumph its living, earnest and life-giving sincerity. So shall it be with ours, dear Bertha! So shall our love triumph over all opposition of father as of all others. Nay, though my father never yielded—though my family still kept insensible to your merits, yet shall *I* so wrong them—so wrong myself—as to yield to the wrong, and give you up, and sacrifice myself to silly prejudices, or a blind mulish obstinacy that rejects, reason, feeling, and the claims of youthful ardor? But, there is no obstacle, here, however seemingly stubborn, which will not be overcome. My father is a man of warm affections, and most loving of his children, when most seemingly hostile. He has his humors, but they subside finally into concessions which better show his heart. He will be conciliated. As for Carrie Sinclair—ah! if you cherish one doubt of her, I shall love you one kiss the less. Know that Carrie has already commissioned me to kiss you with a sister’s love, and to bear to you a sister’s welcome. She is prepared to believe you all that I have painted you to her imagination.”

The girl yielded with a sweet sigh, to the ardent clasp with which the lover folded her to his arms, at the conclusion of his speech. Let us leave them for a-while, to watch the circles in the water, if they please, to note the glittering shafts of sunlight upon the ever-glimpsing stream, to listen to the sudden voice of the mocking-bird which has just taken perch upon a twig of the tree not twenty feet above their heads, and there sits, balancing and swinging, while he sings of the gay life of the triumphant lover.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A PAIR OF ARCADIANs.

WHILE our major of dragoons, seizing a brief respite from the toils of war, was solacing himself in the embrace of love, let us return to the village of Orangeburg, and make the personal acquaintance of other parties, of whom, hitherto, we have only heard.

The dwelling of the widow Bruce was, at the time of which we write, one of the most pretentious in the village. It was a *double* house of two stories upon a basement cellar, and faced with an ample piazza. It occupied a central position in the place, being situated in the main street some two squares distant from the jail in a northwest direction. No traces of it now remain.

The widow, herself, was a Scotchwoman and a loyalist. She believed devoutly in Britain and in George the Third; was fully assured of her principles, ready in their assertion, inflexible in their maintenance, and perfectly satisfied of the ultimate and complete triumph of royalty in its endeavor to maintain itself in the country. She was by temperament an aristocrat, proud, high-spirited, lofty of bearing, delicate in consideration, and tenacious of all the proprieties. She was a woman of decided character, with a temper of her own; of good face and figure, stately and of excellent carriage. At thirty-five or forty, her age at this time, she was not too old to cultivate the graces, or to feel the necessity of looking her best upon great occasions. She was not rich, but in moderate circumstances; and we are not to suppose that she kept an ordinary. Her house simply yielded its hospitalities (for a consideration, no doubt) to visitors of distinction. The magnates of the rival parties, alone, were welcome. Here, accordingly, my lords Cornwallis and Raw-

don made their headquarters when they visited the place; and so, at other periods, did the American leaders, especially Governor Rutledge, who was quite a favorite with the widow, in spite of his intensely rebel predilections. In those days, the utter disruption of society in Carolina—the fact that the Revolution had divided families, and placed in opposition the members of the same circle—led necessarily to great toleration among all persons of sensibility. The widow Bruce was an honest loyalist, but there were sundry honest rebels whom she could welcome to her abode with no diminution of her ancient hospitality.

Her house being aristocratic in pretension, it was quite natural that all *new men*, ambitious of position, should prefer it as a place of lodging, to that of Jack Baltezegar who was the professed publican of the village. Honest Jack was the democrat *par excellence* of the place; not one of that class of noisy, brawling, impudent demagogues of the present day, at once insolent and ignorant; but a genuine, simple, frank, good-humored fellow, rough and unpretending, who was willing to serve you and provide for you, and receive your money with thanks, and send you forth with a blessing when you departed. Jack Baltezegar was a good specimen of the village-landlord, as well in person and deportment, as in taste and principle. He was a baldheaded, ruby-nosed, broad-mouthed, lively-eyed fellow, short and squab of figure, with face and belly equally round and ample, fond of jest and dinner, and no slouch at a *rouse*, with a group of good fellows in the hall, after all the demure lodgers have gone off to bed. His tavern, which was of more humble appearance and dimensions than that of the widow Bruce, stood upon Main street, *i. e.*, the Charleston road, and was the resort of all persons of moderate means, of humble pretensions, and such especially as thought much more of their ease and freedom than of social rank and appearances.

Now, it was wholly owing to this difference of *status* that the lodging-house of the widow Bruce, was preferred to that of Jack Baltezegar, by our captain of mounted riflemen, Richard Inglehardt. Inglehardt was a *new man*; an ambitious man, anxious to shake off old and inferior associations; anxious to bring himself into constant communication with persons of

whose social rank there could be no question. His family, and that of Jack Baltezegar, had been closely intimate; but between himself and honest Jack, there was a broad sandy stretch—a desert scarcely passable—which neither sought to overpass, and which the ambitious captain would prefer to see increasing in breadth of space and depth of sand. Jack Baltezegar knew—none better—all the humble antecedents of Richard Inglehardt. It was the most impertinent sort of knowledge, which Jack was not disposed to keep sealed up from the vulgar sense. He might have been civil enough to keep silence, had Richard been sensible enough to have foreborne giving the preference to the house of Widow Bruce. Had he done so, indeed, it might have been the better for himself—might have secured him greater popularity—for, the truth must be told, Richard was more feared—respected, perhaps—than loved. He had abandoned his *caste*, an unforgivable offence, which moved the dislike of all its members; and he had not quite succeeded in forcing himself upon the affections, or the full confidence of that other circle which he sought to penetrate; and this moved the scorn and derision of his old associates—none of whom was more sharp and satirical than our excellent Jack Baltezegar. Now, Jack was, besides, though in secret, a revolutionist. He did not publish his articles of faith, it is true; and he rather avoided all question in respect to them; but, in his own way, he suffered the patriots to know that he was an ally whenever the wind blew from the right quarter.

It was not with any eagerness, we may state, that the widow Bruce consented to receive Captain Richard Inglehardt into her dwelling. She, too, was quite well acquainted with his first beginnings, and early associations. She did not incline to these, and she did not much affect the character of the man. As a lodger he would never, before the Revolution, have found his way to her board; but that event forced people into new and seemingly unnatural relations and the widow Bruce was compelled to recognise the claims of the loyalist captain, in a lawless period, whom, as the son of an obscure overseer, of no good character, she would have spurned from her threshold. Inglehardt felt all this, but was quite willing that circumstances should do for his desires what personally he might not have done

himself; and his good sense did not suffer him to feel any resentments in consequence of what he knew to be the real, though suppressed feelings of his hostess toward him. She despised him—that he knew—as an individual; but as she did not outrage his pride by any wanton exhibition of her sentiments, he was by no means unwilling that she should entertain them. In fact, he had nothing to desire at her hands more than he received, and beyond this he never troubled himself to consider for a moment what degree of sympathy might exist between them. He had few sympathies himself for anybody, and his heart was of too cold a nature to feel the need of sympathy from others.

Coldness of heart was the great and terrible infirmity of Richard Inglehardt. He could be kind upon occasions—nay, was habitually kind—forbearing rather, and when unmoved by selfish considerations. But the moment that self interposed, however slightly, he was as unscrupulous as a tiger. Mild and conciliatory of manner, slow and subdued in speech, patient and quiet under all circumstances, deliberate in all his moods, he was subtle, sly, suspicious, ever working in secret like a spider, stretching his meshes on every side, and ensnaring, where he could, with a restless cunning, that worked half the time from mere instinct, and the love of the employment. He was passionate in nothing. His hate or love was never a thing of extremes, never uncalculating, never rash. He could abandon, with small feeling of sacrifice, the object of attachment for a consideration; and could embrace his worst enemy, in the attainment of a new desire. Essentially cold of heart, he had no friendships, acknowledged no sympathies, and subjected all his feelings, with little effort, to the requisitions of the reason or of the moment. He was, in brief, one of those unfortunate men whose minds grow prematurely into strength at the expense of their affections. His intellect at fifteen was as much matured as at twenty-five. In short he had never been a boy. Ripe from the beginning, his mind was as subtle, and deliberate, as well balanced, and cool and circumspect, as if endowed with fifty years of social experience.

A mind thus constituted, without the eager passions and generous impulses of youth, rarely goes beyond a certain gradu-

ated and respectable measure of performance. It is stationary, usually — unprogressive, and, as it usually excites large expectations at first, so it is apt to disappoint its own promise in the end. It is, perhaps, true in general, that great minds are commonly slow of growth to maturity. There must be a gradual rise to strength, if permanence is to be attained; and the very sobriety of youth is really an unfavorable indication for the future performances of manhood. Of Richard Inglehardt, the calm, sensible, cool, discreet, assured boy, large expectations had been formed. He still remained calm, and cool, and sensible; and, in moderate affairs, even sagacious; but something more is essential to maintain the claims of such a beginning. That he had not advanced beyond his earliest marks, was, in fact, proof of retrograde. And he had not advanced. He had shown himself brave, but not brilliant; cunning, but not wise; calculating, but not profound; able in the performance of ordinary duties, but never nobly adventurous. As a captain of mounted riflemen, he had been diligent. He knew his duty, but he never rose to performances which cast a glory over the simple duty. He had never conceived greatly, as he lacked impulse and enthusiasm; and exhibited no resources beyond the narrow range of customary endeavor. The lack of enthusiasm is always a proof of deficient genius. Talents he had; an adaptable capacity for the work before him; he was a shrewd judge of common men; could conceive their motives; anticipate their projects; thwart, or promote them, according to the suggestions of his own policy; but enthusiasm foiled him; he could never comprehend the worth of impulse, generous self sacrifice, ardent adventure, eager and impetuous zeal. His cunning failed him usually when he had to deal with these qualities. He not only did not quite understand them, he did not believe in their existence; or, if he did, it was only to rate the possessor as lacking in that *common-sense* virtue which was his own and only secret. Now, a common-sense mind, with a cold heart, is a thing of cunning only — not of wisdom — not of virtue; — without magnanimity; capable of small operations, among small people; and usually failing deplorably in moments of great exigency, when it requires a brilliant conception to encounter the odds of an extreme necessity.

Yet this man, so cold of heart, so insensible to sympathy, so calculating in his affections—such as they were—was a professed lover of Bertha Travis. What was the secret of this anomaly? The contradiction exists simply in appearance. He was a man of objects, continually seeking something—always aiming and grasping; and, while in pursuit, singularly tenacious of his object. He possessed a dogged sort of perseverance, which supplied the lack of zeal; but his pursuit, not grounded upon the affections or the sympathies, but the result of calculation only, could be arrested in a moment, by the suggestion of any new motive of self to his mind. Of course, he was not wanting in animal passions also, and these become terrible powers of evil in a cold heart. His early years had been passed in near neighborhood of the Travis family. His father had been for several seasons in the employ of Captain Travis, as a keeper of his large stock of cattle, and, for a time, as the overseer of his negroes. The boy had set his eye, even while she was yet a child, upon the budding charms of Bertha. He had determined, with wonderful precocity, that she should be his wife. She was beautiful, and he had a taste for beauty, which was stronger than any feelings or affections of his heart. She had the promise of wealth, and at a very early period, he had discovered the almost universal power of wealth, and he desired wealth as a means of power. Power was his principal craving, and his aim contemplated every possible avenue to it. He had, accordingly, resolved upon making Bertha Travis his wife.

Of course, he felt all the difficulties in the way to the attainment of his object. The almost immeasurable space which, in a society like that of South Carolina, separates the overseer's family from that of his employer, presented a barrier, the height and breadth of which the calculating eye of young Inglehardt began to scan and study when he had but entered his teens. He did not even try to deceive himself in respect to its formidable impediments. The Revolutionary struggle was favorable to its overthrow, and he determined to avail himself of it. A time of general commotion in society is apt to be destructive of most conventionalities.

But there was yet another barrier in the little damsel herself. She had, strange to say, at a very early period, shown

herself singularly averse to the youth. The instincts of the young rarely deceive them, when they themselves possess enthusiasm and sensibility. The very lack of the former, in the boy, though she could by no means describe the deficiency, trace its source, or define its precise effects upon herself, was yet a source of dislike and aversion. She repelled all his approaches;—she did not fear him, but she avoided him. Her instincts rightly led her to regard him as of cold, selfish, unscrupulous character; to *feel* rather than he was so; and this, too, without expending thought upon the subject. It was only in the full rush of the revolutionary torrent, that Bertha Travis ever began to think that there might be any serious danger to herself, in the undesired preference which Richard Inglehardt bestowed upon her charms.

Still, up to a late period, his preference was of a somewhat undemonstrative character. He was not less tenacious of his object, because he pursued it quietly, in secret, and with a circumspect avoidance, outwardly, of all design. He had proposed to her, it is true, and been rejected;—civilly, but firmly;—sufficiently so to convince him that she was not to be won by him, through the medium of her affections. But he was not discouraged. He had been advised of her intimacy with Sinclair. He had once met him at the house of Travis; he had seen and felt that the latter was a formidable rival; he had seen the love of Bertha Travis speaking out in eye, and lip, and gesture, without constraint, at the approach of this rival. He did not hate Sinclair for this reason; it was the chance of the game that had given the latter his ascendancy; but he resolved to baffle him nevertheless; to destroy him if he could; to make his fate, if possible, a means for acting upon the fears of the maiden. He had another agency for this purpose, in the father of Bertha. He knew the corrupt nature of Travis. He had fathomed some of his secrets. His study was to perfect his power over the fortunes of the latter, and make the condition of his safety, the hand of his daughter.

And, in the prosecution of these schemes, he had steadily engaged for months—nay, almost for years—and, with a certain degree of success, in respect to the affairs of the father—which

by this time, began to render him more than ever confident of his game.

And Travis, himself, a sly and subtle politician, had discovered the practice of the other; had begun to fear him; kept close watch upon his movements, and steadily worked, on his hand, to strengthen his defences, and multiply his resources against the moment of attack. He felt that he was measurably in the power of Inglehardt already; in other words, that the latter had discovered certain secrets which would greatly prejudice him with the British commanders, Rawdon and Balfour; a condition of his affairs which became much more complicated as he reflected upon the uncertainty of the Revolutionary issue. Were he sure of the triumph of the British, the game was in his own hands, provided he was willing to sacrifice his daughter to the man who held the secret of his erring practice. But this result was daily becoming more and more doubtful. Travis was too old a soldier, and too keen a politician, not to perceive that the resources of Great Britain were nearly exhausted; that, in fact, for some time past, she had been fighting her battles, through the weapons of the colonists themselves. The loyal Americans now constituted the best portions of her veteran regiments. The moment that this fact should become fully apparent to the colonists, themselves, would be, he well knew, the signal of their withdrawal from those ranks, in which, conquered or conquering, they were still only sacrificing native blood in behalf of foreign power.

But, let us view these two persons together, Inglehardt and Travis, as they sit, fronting each other at a table, in the chamber of the former, at the house of the stately widow Bruce. Travis has been invited to the conference. It is the resumption of one which took place the night before at Baltezegar's, where Travis usually had a chamber.

See the two as they sit at the table. There they sit, smiling both, suspicious both, with the sympathy of an equal cunning alone bringing them together; each with a selfish object; each well aware that all the ordinary securities among men—loyalty, good faith, a common object, a common feeling—are all equally wanting to either party. Both are persons, to the casual eye, of rather pleasing aspect; smooth of face, lively of eye, intelligent of

visage. In both, however, the acute physiognomist will detect some unpleasant peculiarities. Neither looks into the eye of his neighbor. Both would like to do so, but neither is willing to expose his own. The lips of Travis show some incertitude of character; those of Inglehardt are firm enough, but the lips do not smile; they only part when he would laugh. Both are men of sallow complexion, and dark hair; but Travis is fifty; Inglehardt scarce twenty-five. Yet how equal in years! The latter was as old as Travis when but twenty, as he had lived only in the intellect. Whatever the moral deficiencies and obliquities of the other, he was not wanting in the affections, and a heart so much contributes to the proper human wisdom, that we may give him credit for even an intellectual progress which the other can never make. *His* mind is already old; *his* heart has never grown at all. The one has dwarfed the other, out of sight, as if it never had existence.

What pleasant jest has been provoking them to laughter? That laughter of the heartless—What a lie it is! What a mockery of heart and humanity! A laugh, to be of any value, to compel any respect or sympathy, must be down-right, honest—an ebullition which we not only would not, but can not restrain. A strained laugh has the effect of a serpent's hiss, a savage's howl, the child-like cry of the hawk. It tells of mischief. Beware!

But the parties know each other.

The laughter subsides, and both faces suddenly sink into gravity. An honest laugh subsides slowly. It is like a generous sunset which leaves its sweet soft purplish tints upon the sky, even when the parent smile is gone from sight.

There is no smile now on either face. Each looks gravely upon the floor or the table. Travis rises, restlessly, and lights his pipe which he has laid upon the mantelpiece.

"Will you drink, Captain Travis?" asks the younger politician in deliberate accents, measuring every syllable, and rapping his snuff-box with nice manner ere he pinches.

"Drink! I don't care if I do, captain. What have you got?"

"Jamaica and Monongahela, both."

And the speaker rose slowly, placed his thumb and fore-

finger to his nostril, sneezed with moderate emphasis, laid the snuff-box in a particular place upon the table, took out his pocket-handkerchief, passed it deliberately about his upper lip, returned it to his pocket, and made three steps to his closet, when he produced two royally large black bottles, both square, and both half filled with liquor.

"The Jamaica is particularly old, Captain Travis. It is part of a small supply which I had the good fortune to secure, during my last visit to Charleston, at the sale of some confiscated effects of Gadsden, and some other of the rebel gentry. The Monongahela, is of some age also, but it has no family characteristics to recommend it. It is a good creature, however, as good as the district can furnish of its age."

All this was spoken in low tones, very slowly, drawlingly in fact, with a slight nasal twang, which might, however, be due to the snuff, which Inglehardt too freely used, rather than to the natural tones of his voice. The whole manner of the man was artificial. His true nature was to be found in art—that is, in the exclusive sovereignty of his mental constitution.

"The Monongahela for me," said Travis. "I am half inclined to think that the Jamaica is hurtful. The whiskey never affects the brain or liver. The Jamaica does both."

And he poured out, as he spoke, a moderate stoup of the liquor, which he only dashed with water. Inglehardt was even more moderate. He drank but little. Abstinence was among his virtues. He never suffered his wits to escape from the leash of will and prudence.

"Neither troubles mine, I think."

"Hah! you never give them a chance. You are afraid of the bottle."

"Not afraid—only non-committal."

"A politician even in your liquors, as in your prayers."

"Truth. I give myself up to no excess in either. You may safely trust that Monongahela, captain. It is mild with age, and gentle in degree with its purity."

"What say you then to a stoup together of equal measure? Approve your eulogium by your own practice."

"Ah! if I dared; but I have not the head for it."

"Pshaw! you have head enough for anything. As for any

danger to your head from anything that both of us could drink, I should say it was impossible. Your head is as stubborn as mine, as capable of endurance;—nay, more so; only try it; have faith in yourself, and yield up a trifle more of your life to the follies of it. After all, there are moments when I fancy that drinking is one of the best panaceas for trouble. If I had my attic full of that old Madeira which the parish gentry soak daily, I should perhaps give myself no trouble about the workings of my own brain, or that of my neighbors.”

“That fierce old baron, Sinclair, is said to have his attic full to overflowing of the oldest in the country.”

This was spoken with unwonted abruptness for so delicate a speaker. But Travis was on his guard. He answered carelessly, and with great indifference of manner.

“So I hear! He has wealth enough for it. But his case is a warning against old Madeira. He has a pipe of it in his legs—gout-casks—which he can’t tap, and wouldn’t willingly carry.”

“But the Madeira is a gout-remedy.”

“So the fools say! It is the disease itself. The gout, like most of the diseases of rich men, comes out of the kitchen and the cellar.”

“Nay, we know that it is hereditary.”

“Ah! that sounds authoritative; but you are nearer the mark to say that *habits* are hereditary. The son is apt to live as his father taught him, and to suffer from the same sauces. They both spice the broth after an hereditary measure, and have hereditary puncheons in their pegs, accordingly. Catch the spawn of the old fish, and transplant to other waters, if you would take out of their scales the taint of the old mud. I doubt if you ever knew a son who was rescued from his father’s *examples*, before he is able to perceive them, who ever exhibited his father’s infirmities, physical or moral.”

Inglehardt seemed to muse, and fingered and tapped his snuff-box, and fed his nostrils tenderly; then wiped his upper lip with an easy gesture, restored his ’kerchief to his pocket, and said—all of a sudden:—

“You have tasted of old Sinclair’s wine?”

This was said carelessly, though quickly. Travis in a mo-

ment perceived that it meant really—"I know that you have been to see him lately." He perceived the snare. He saw that any effort at evasion would involve him in deeper suspicion; he determined upon a frank manner, at all events, and as free a revelation of the truth as he deemed it good policy to make. These reflections cost him not a moment; and he replied:—

"That I have, and first-rate liquor it is. It deserves its reputation. I paid the old soldier a visit some five weeks ago—bought a hundred beeves of him—and he very civilly insisted upon my dining with him—was very gracious, indeed, and gave me of the best. The bottles he put on the table were crusted with cobwebs. The wine was then twenty-nine years old. He mentioned, with a chuckle, that my Lords Rawdon and Fitzgerald, had brought up bottom, after earnest soundings, from no less than a score of bottles in one evening."

The wily Inglehardt was baffled.

"How the d—l!" thought Travis to himself, "did he get at that visit? I had taken every precaution!"

Of course, he knew, from the question of Inglehardt, that he *had* made the discovery. The only mode left him was to anticipate exposure by frankness, and disarm it. He could not disarm suspicion; but he might baffle evidence.

"Ah! my Lords Rawdon and Fitzgerald. So Fitzgerald has been there! That must have been just when I was laid on my back by this troublesome wound. No doubt they relished the old fellow's wine. They can't get such wine in England."

"No, indeed; Carolina's the region for the ripening of Madeira. Zounds, my lips smack of its flavor at the very recollection. I wish I had a thousand bottles of it—the contents of his garret would probably yield quite as many."

"And why should you not, Captain Travis?"

"How should I?—I'd like to know the process."

"It is an easy one when the work of confiscation becomes general, and spreads a little more from the seaboard into the interior."

• "Ah! but how will it affect him? Why, he is as fierce and stubborn a loyalist as any in the country."

"Words! words! Do you suppose that his mere profession of loyalty will save his estates, in the teeth of his son's active

rebellion? Will his majesty's government suffer his estates to fall into the hands of the rebel, simply because his father *professed* a fidelity which he did not sustain in any other way? I see no reason why the Sinclair Barony should not fall into the general stock, and reward some true subject who has shown himself in deeds, as well as words."

"Truly, if such be the prospect before us, the pickings will be considerable. The old Barony would cut up famously. But old Sinclair is strong with Rawdon and Balfour, and I suspect the property will all be covered by the name of the daughter."

"Well, she will reward some good loyalist who has carried a sword in action, for his active services. Somehow, the property must go into the proper hands. The only doubt really is about the issue of the war."

"But can that be doubtful?"

Nobody better knew how doubtful was the result than the speaker; in fact, he was chiefly occupied at this very moment, in preparing against this doubt. But he knew that Inglehardt was sounding him. It was the cue of Travis to make the other believe that he himself had no sort of question that the British arms would be successful. The policy of Inglehardt depended upon this success; and, as most persons can easily be persuaded of what they wish, Travis took for granted that, though he seemed to intimate a doubt of the final issue, he yet felt none. Still, Inglehardt was not unwilling to suggest to his companion the fear which he hardly felt himself. He replied:—

"There's no saying. Troops do not arrive with sufficient rapidity from England."

"Three fresh Irish regiments only the other day," answered the other.

"Yes; but not meant for this colony—designed for Virginia, and only permitted to be used by Lord Rawdon temporarily, in the necessity of relieving Ninety-Six. Then, you see, these Irish troops are not to be relied on. The moment they get an opportunity they desert and join the rebels. They entertain no love for the British flag. No! our best chances depend upon the loyal Americans, and they come in very slowly now. Here have I been recruiting for a month, and have succeeded

in picking up only sixteen raw fellows, hardly worth their salt. Things, I fear, begin to look suspicious."

This was said with great gravity and deliberation, and a melancholy shaking of the head. But Travis knew his man. "He hopes," such was his mental reflection, "to win me on to let out my own calculation. But I know better than to commit myself to him by declaring my true conviction. No, no, Master Inglehardt, you don't catch this weasel asleep!" Then, aloud, and with some show of disquiet:—

"Pshaw! Captain Inglehardt, you are in a croaking humor to-day. You surprise me by such notions. As for Great Britain lacking troops, or being compelled to rely upon native Americans, that seems to me one of the idlest fancies in the world. Our loyalist troops are but a drop in the bucket."

"By Jupiter! Captain Travis, they are pretty much all that are worth having in the bucket. Look how the British armies are now made up. The veteran troops are nearly all American. The Hessians are pretty much used up; the Scotch regiments are not half full; the Irish desert when they can, are perpetually mutinying, their officers dare not rely upon them, and tremble, when they go into action, lest their own bayonets should be the first at their bosoms. Half of Lord Rawdon's force at Camden were loyalists; of the thousand men of Ferguson, that gave up to the mountaineers, at King's mountain, more than nine hundred were American born. And who but native Americans have kept the post of 'Ninety-Six,' under Cruger, so long against the whole of the rebel army of Greene? I tell you, Captain Travis, that the forces of Great Britain, now in the South, would be swallowed up everywhere, but for the rifles of our own people."

"And if this be so, Captain Inglehardt—which I am very far from admitting—what better proof can we have of the ultimate success of our cause? If, keeping her own powers in reserve, Great Britain can so direct the resources supplied by the loyal population, as to keep the rebels in subjection, do you not see that she can, at any moment, achieve the fullest results of victory, by only a slight increase of the foreign forces?"

"Ay, but has she kept her own forces in reserve? Has she not employed them to the uttermost? Why did she need to

hire and buy the Hessians? Clearly, because her own people lacked numbers, or were reluctant to join the war. The Scotch are not a numerous people. England herself cut off too large a proportion of the Highland Scotch, not to feel the want of them now. The Irish are unfaithful and not to be trusted. What then? She now depends upon them, chiefly, as the reserved powers of which you speak; and these, with our native Americans, constitute all her strength here at present. When you add to this, that the drain upon the British treasury for six years, will hardly now suffer her to hire more troops, or even pay those who are in arms at present, you will see that I have some good reasons for holding the present issue doubtful."

Now, Inglehardt had truly painted the condition of Great Britain, the exhaustion equally of her men and money; but, strange to say, he did not himself fully believe in the extent of the danger as he described it; he believed still only as he wished; but his subtle policy was to persuade Travis that he himself was beginning to be affected by those arguments, which he had reason to think had been already adopted by Travis, of his own reasoning. If Travis, now, should only be so far deluded into the notion that he, Inglehardt, like himself, was beginning to meditate how best to prepare for the backdoor of retreat—and, thus persuaded, should let something of his own meditations to this effect be seen, he should secure such further hold upon the father of Bertha Travis, as would most effectually place him in his power.

But the old politician was not so easily gulled. He laughed at the gloomy picture which the other had painted of the future.

"No!" said he, "Great Britain is like a rock against which all the waves of rebellion, though numerous as billows of the Atlantic, would chafe and beat in vain. The mother-country is only economical of her resources. She has adopted the true policy of making us fight the battle with as little cost to herself as possible. When it is necessary to put forth her strength—her men and money—they will not be wanting. Do not despond, Inglehardt. There is nothing to fear—nothing to doubt—there is no danger that the rebel power will ever succeed. As you yourself have shown, the native loyalists have proved quite a sufficient match, almost alone, for the native rebels.

One error the British government *has* made, and that, indeed, is a serious one, because so full of injustice. It is a wonder, indeed, that it has not worked for her the most mischievous results."

"What is that?"

"She expects us to find her the troops, yet refuses to let us find the general officers. At best, all that our distinguished young men can get from her, is a colonelcy, a majority, a captaincy. They are not trusted as generals of brigade or division — have few discretionary trusts confided to them; yet could I pick out a score or two of natives, of this one province, who are far better fitted to plan a pitched battle than half that are now in command in the British armies. This is a blind policy. It is the one which Britain pursued all through the French and Indian wars, and it cost us immense loss in blood and treasure. It has cost us this very rebellion, which never would have taken place in the South, had not our own able men been everywhere thrust upon the shelves. Why, for example, should *you* remain five years a captain only, when such persons as Barry, and Sheridan, Mad Campbell, Fool Campbell, Bulldog Campbell, and Weasel Campbell, all take higher rank. I know *you*, and so do they; and they know, as I do, that you are better fitted for a colonelcy of foot or dragoons than any one of these people. Yet, after all your services, for six years, you are just in the same position as when you brought your own company into camp. If they could have taken your captaincy from you, without discouraging all the loyalists, do you suppose that it would not have been given to some favorite, some younger son of an old house, who was found too troublesome, or expensive at home? Certainly, this policy has done more toward keeping back the royal cause from triumph, than anything besides."

The speech of Travis was an adroit one. It was, in some degree, turning the tables upon his companion, insinuating an argument, *ad hominem*, which, in a case of even moderate self-esteem, might be found to tell. In other respects, the remarks of the speaker betrayed such perfect confidence in the power of Great Britain to effect the final conquest of the country, that it threw Inglehardt off from the chase of the one idea he had pursued, though it did by no means persuade him to any faith in

the honesty of the speaker in the professions he had made. As for the adroit appeal to his own pride, in the reference to the neglect of native merit, and its slow promotion, the bait did not take; though, we may add, *sub rosa*, that Inglehardt had been laboring secretly—(was it a secret to Travis?)—for a higher command, and had found his wishes invariably set aside, in favor of some young springald, of famous blood, and broken fortunes, from the mother-country. He felt the truth of what Travis urged accordingly; but it failed of its effect, in disarming him of his suspicions of the speaker, simply because he felt that the point was urged with the evident purpose to act upon himself. The wily man will distrust every argument, however true and just, which he feels to be suggested with a specific purpose, which is yet not openly avowed.

“Well,” said he, somewhat musingly, and feeding his nostrils again from the snuff-box—“I am glad that you think so well of our general prospect. I confess that I had some misgivings. But what you say seems reasonable enough. It is clearly the policy of Great Britain to fight the rebels at as little cost of men and money as she can. I only hope that she may not carry her economy too far. War is an expensive luxury in which one can not exercise a very nice economy. Men wish to be paid well for the privilege of being shot and bayoneted. It is only the gold in the pouch that reconciles one to the prospect of lead in the paunch. As for this army favoritism, you may be right in some degree, Captain Travis. There is quite too much of it. In respect to myself, why, I certainly should not quarrel with his majesty’s seal to a commission making me major of brigade, or giving me an independent legion. The thing has certainly occurred to me, but more as a something I had a right to expect, than because of any earnest desire that I have for it. But, as a poor captain of rangers, I am not uncomfortable. It is a snug command, easily managed, and, if I have only a small trust, I am relieved from all heavy responsibilities. If I receive no favors, I am at least not burdened with the sense of obligation. The neglect of my services does not mortify me to a loss of my appetite.”

“You are more philosophical than I should be—than most

persons are," answered the other. "I am glad that I have survived all my military ambition."

"Yes—but you have not survived all your *appetites*," replied the other, with a smile which was something of a sneer—"Your ambition is more modest, captain, than some of your other passions. A commissariat is not a bad sphere for making friends with fortune. In truth, such is my modesty, that I do not know but I should be willing to exchange places with you."

"You would soon sicken of it," answered Travis, somewhat hastily.

"Never, because of surfeit," replied Inglehardt. "But I do not quarrel with your good fortune. I keep in mind the fact that your operations, with your economy, must all result in the prosperity of your future son-in law."

"Bertha Travis will be in comfortable circumstances should anything happen to me," replied the affectionate father, somewhat evasively.

"Why, Captain Travis, she ~~will~~ be a millionaire. Talk of comfortable circumstances, indeed! I would venture to say that, by the time this rebellion is crushed, you will be one of the richest men in the province."

"Pshaw! you talk wildly. Only comfortable—comfortable! A moderate estate, which, well managed, will enable a small family to live independently."

"No more? Well, fortunately, Bertha Travis herself is one of those treasures which would sufficiently reconcile me to such a moderate prospect of fortune. By-the-way, Travis, this thing drags a little too heavily. Though apt to take most things coolly, yet I confess, in the matter of the affections, I am rather an eager, impatient person."

And the speaker uttered these words even more deliberately and drawlingly than usual, and resorted to his snuff box, slowly tapping it first, then segregating, with the thumb and forefinger, the smallest possible particles from the mass, and feeding with it, as a young lady would feed canary or humming bird, the slightly reddened tips of his sharply-elongated nose.

Travis thought to himself:—"Now d—n the skunk, does he expect me to believe, or does he himself believe, that he has

got any warm blood in his veins! He impatient! By Heavens, an ounce of impatience in his blood would prove of better use to himself and to all other persons, than all the virtues in his carcass."

But Travis did not venture to speak aloud such "parlously" offensive matter. The reflection was instantaneous, and did not prevent him from a sufficiently prompt reply.

"It is not my fault, Inglehardt, that the affair drags so slowly."

"I am afraid, my dear fellow, that it *is* your fault."

"How? I have done all that I could. I have urged your cause to Bertha——"

"No, Travis, you have *not* done all that you could; and there are such modes of urging a cause as infallibly to defeat it."

"You do not mean to accuse me of bad faith, Inglehardt?"

"Not exactly that! I flatter myself, that, putting out of sight altogether what is evidently your preference and policy, I possess certain securities for your good faith, the value of which no one better knows than yourself. Now, I feel sure that you are not heedless of these securities, and I could almost persuade myself that, apart from these, your policy perceives, in my union with Bertha Travis, the greatest advantages to both. Let her once be mine, and our united strength renders us both secure, and enables us to work with more confidence upon the British authorities. Then, indeed, I might secure this colonelcy—assuming it to be an object of real importance and desire; and, instead of a mere deputy commissary, you might pass into the department as its head. Why will you not see these advantages as I do?"

"I do see them—I am certainly not blind."

"Hardly with open eyes, Travis, or you would do something more for their promotion."

"I do all that I can. I have urged your claims upon Bertha."

"Ay, you have said—'This man seeks you, and I could wish that you would be pleased to see in him a marvellous proper person.' That is all; is that urging *my* claims? Look you, my amiable father-in-law, that is to be—*ought to be*, at least—

and will be, if he knows where wisdom and safety lie together;—look you—is this the time, or is yours the situation, when you can suffer the tastes and prejudices of a silly young girl, that as yet knows nothing, to pule about her heart, and her affections, and all that stuff? Shall the plans, the schemes, the fortunes—nay, the very safety—of men, be jeopardied by such absurd pleadings? She does not love me;—well? In all your experiences of the sex, how many of them have loved wisely?—how many have married where they did not honestly love, and yet passed a very comfortable life of it? Why should Bertha Travis not love me? I am not an Adonis, true; but I have tolerably comely proportions. Do you not suppose that I will make her quite as happy—to talk in the ridiculous dialect of vulgar people—as that insolent fellow Sinclair? I am not brutal of habit, am not a profligate liver, have my tastes, as you know—nay, pride myself a little upon them—have had a very tolerable education, and believe that I can carry myself quite as much as a gentleman, as any aristocrat in the parishes. You do not believe—I know—that there is any prospect of your daughter forfeiting the usual amount of human happiness in becoming my wife?”

It was delightful to note the cool deliberate sweetness with which all this was spoken—slowly, softly, and sprinkled with the finest of Scotch snuff, in frequent parentheses. Travis was getting uneasy. He was not an impulsive man, but he had more ardor, and was more impatient than his antagonist, to whom this difference gave a decided advantage. He answered:—

“No! no! I have no doubt that you will make my daughter as happy as anybody else; and I have urged upon her these very arguments. I have counselled, entreated, argued the matter with her——”

“A moment, my dear Travis, a moment. This is going over old ground. You have told me of these pleas and arguments before. Of course they did not convince Bertha Travis, and, of course, also, they do not satisfy me. She is a young damsel, who has had very much her own way, and is tickled just now with certain girlish fancies, which persuade her that one Willie Sinclair, major of dragoons in the rebel service, is the only true

God in the heaven of a young girl's heart. Now, a young woman's fancy, having such a tickler, is not prepared to listen to an old man's prosing philosophies, meant to persuade her into quite another sort of fancy for another sort of man. No! no! no argument of man, however wise in reason and profound in policy, could ever hold its ground, or make any impression, against a young girl's fancy. Her fancy, my dear good Travis, becomes her religion. She has no other faith for the time being—not till she gets a new fancy, potent enough to push the old one from its place."

"Why, what would you have me to do? I have tried—I have told her——"

"Suffer me again, my dear captain. Suppose that, instead of a dozen, you had urged these arguments upon her a thousand times? What then? Do you deceive yourself with the notion that a mere repetition, however frequently made, of an argument, or a plea, which the ear of the hearer refuses to receive, will avail you anything more than a single urging? The mere repetition of a plea or a petition, which was held to be distasteful at the first, only renders it more and more distasteful as you continue to urge it."

"What would you have me do?"

"Have you told her, sir—that this marriage is necessary to your safety? That, unless it takes place, her father is in danger of being punished as a swindler, as a forger of false accounts, as a speculator of the public moneys, as, in short, a traitor to the cause of his majesty, George the Third, king of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, &c. Have you told her this, Captain Travis?"

Now fancy all this matter delivered with the utmost deliberation, quietly, even gently, in the softest tones, and without a single passage or word being emphasized, in obedience to the requisition of its own import. Fancy all this, if you would conceive the cold, stern, deliberate, strategic nature of Richard Inglehardt. No wonder that a cold sweat stood upon the forehead of Captain Travis as he listened.

But Travis was a man of passions. He had a quickening pulse—was not without pride—was a father, and a fond one—though, no doubt, a great rascal—and he irked greatly at

the cold remorseless tyranny of the man who had him in his power—he, too, the son of his overseer!

He started from his seat, and strode across the room, his lips white with rage.

“No! Captain Inglehardt. I have told her none of these things, for I believe none of them—I hold none of them to be true.”

“Ah! my friend, you are rash now. You are surely forgetful of all your reason and experience. I do not wish to wound your pride, or rouse your passion. My appeal is to your common sense!”

“D—n common sense.”

“As you please—after you have heard. Now do me the kindness to examine these papers. You need not be angry with them, and seek to destroy them—or you may—it matters not. They are only copies. You will find there some memoranda which would be of considerable interest to Colonel Balfour in the future discussion of your accounts. You will see that the facts can all be established by good witnesses. I need not tell you that I am in possession of all the facts, and all the clues, to your transactions for government during the last three years. I need not add to a gentleman of such clear understanding as yourself, that these proofs, laid before either of the generals of the crown would lead to the confiscation of other estates than those of old Sinclair. I gave you a proof of these papers on a previous occasion, my dear Travis. Why will you force me to idle reiteration.”

All this was articulated with admirable slowness, softness, and subdued manner, while a most gentle smile lighted up the amiable eyes of the speaker. But the speech did not much mitigate the indignation of Travis. He snatched the proffered papers from the hands of the speaker, dashed them on the floor, and stamped them under feet, saying, as he did so:—

“Ay, sir, but you used no such offensive language when you spoke of this matter before. You spoke of it only as certain mistakes and miscalculations in my accounts, and never dared to apply such epithets to my name as you have just now. Now, Captain Inglehardt, I give you to know that though fifty years of age—twice your age, sir—I have not lost the capacity, or

survived the spirit, which would resent or punish offence. You presume, sir, on a fancied power, to offer insult. But, beware, sir! Another repetition of this offence, and the terms between us must be blood—sir—blood!—your blood or mine.”

Inglehardt listened to this outburst with amazing calm. He sniffed at the snuff while the other was speaking, and ‘kerchiefed his nose with praiseworthy care and deliberation. When Travis ceased, he answered in the sweetest temper:—

“My dear captain, you are unnecessarily angry. I had no purpose to make you so. As for the issue which you threaten, I have only to pray that when the storm comes I may have a dry roof over me. But pistols will hardly be taken in evidence against the truth; pistols will do little to settle my accounts with you, or yours with the crowd. You may judge for yourself, by a single moment of reflection, of what avail they will be here between us, and in the adjustment of our little differences. Either what I say is true, or it is not. If not true, you have only to defy the charge, and concede nothing that I demand in the belief that it is true. If true, and the matter should involve your safety in any wise, as I most respectfully think it does, then you know the terms upon which, alone, the evidence is to be suppressed. Suffer me to repeat them. You are within three weeks to possess me of the hand of your daughter. I care not what arguments you use—I but suggested to you such as you might use, and such as would probably prove effectual—and leave it to you to find better if you can. Once more—your daughter’s hand to be mine in three weeks, sir—three weeks, Captain Travis! Three weeks may be held a liberal term of time, added to a negotiation which has been in progress nearly three years, in all which time, sir, I have been in possession of many other little proofs of errors in your accounts which I have foreborne to include in that catalogue.”

The whole manner of this speech was cruelly civil, moderate of tone—even gentle—and so very deliberate!

For a moment Travis glared upon the speaker with eyes of ill-suppressed hostility. But he tamed himself down, with a few hurried strides about the room, during which Inglehardt wonderfully kept his composure and his chair. Suddenly Travis stood before him.

"You are bent on driving me to the wall, Captain Inglehardt."

"No, sir—only in keeping you from falling under the wall. I so admire your fortunes and the prospect before you, that I would unite mine with yours. Why will you persist in seeing anything unfriendly in this?"

"Why press this matter just now? Why not wait till the war is over?"

"I do not see why love should wait on war a single moment. In the days of chivalry they went hand in hand together. Shall I eat no sweets to-day, because I may be slain in battle to-morrow. Nay, is not that very danger good reason why I should enjoy my sweets to-night? Because nations fight, and I wear harness like the rest, shall I forswear wiving; or shall the woman I love be tutored not to wed me, lest I never come home from battle. In brief, Captain Travis, I have resolved, and you know to what extent. You have my ultimatum. Briefly, will you pledge me the hand of Bertha Travis, the marriage to take effect three weeks from this day—not a day later. Understand me, it must be your positive pledge, now—I shall not be content with any promise that you will plead to her again after the old fashion. Will you give me this pledge?"

The other hurriedly paced the room in silence. He felt himself in the toils; but he had a refuge, and his secret thought—that of the veteran politician always—readily suggested that to gain time was to gain escape. Three weeks embody a world of possibilities. The domain of chance is always a refuge to one in an emergency. Besides—he had his own schemes—and these were rapidly ripening to fulfilment. Three weeks were all that he desired for these. He determined, as it were desperately; and, turning to his antagonist, said:—

"Captain Inglehardt, you hold me and my daughter to hard conditions. You may be a good man and may prove a good husband, but by — you are one of the d—dest cold-blooded tyrants whom I know! But enough! I give you my pledge. It shall be as you say. In three weeks! I yield, sir. You have taken an ungenerous advantage, and I submit! But that shall not make me think more favorably of your mind and heart. You are, I repeat, a most cold-blooded and deliberate tyrant, where you have the power!"

The other smiled with satanic sweetness.

"You do me wrong, Travis. A lover is justified in his exactions in due degree with the extremity of his passion. Come, sir! let us drink the wedding-day—this time, in a more classical beverage than either Jamaica or Monongahela. Here, sir, is a bottle of old Madeira—not, perhaps, so old as that of Baron Sinclair's, but of more sterling body."

"Thank you, no! I will not drink another drop with you to-day! I would I could never see you again, Richard Inglehardt—never! never!"

The other, this time, laughed—and such a short choking laugh, that Travis hastily bade him good day, and looking still as angry as ever, darted out of the room.

"Remember your pledge, Captain Travis," the other called after him, almost as deliberately as ever—"Remember, sir! Remember!"

And when he had gone, the eyes of Inglehardt darkened into a scowl—and he muttered:—

"I have him under my heel—have her at my mercy, or *will* have her—and we shall soon see who shall be the scorned and who the scorner? He can not elude me—can not escape—and he knows it! He will and must use the arguments I have put into his mouth, and she must submit. Ha! ha! She shall to the altar, or he to the halter!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

MEETING OF TRAVIS AND SINCLAIR.

"Sirrah, go up and wind toward Buckley's lodge:
I'll cast about the bottom with my hound,
And I will meet thee under Cony-oak."

Merry Devil of Edmonton.

You suppose, no doubt, that Travis disappeared from the chamber of Inglehardt in a towering passion—that he was fairly and uncomfortably cornered—driven to the wall, as he himself phrased it! Not a bit of it! His most admirable effects of passion were all simulated. He had really gained a point in the game. His policy was to lull his antagonist into the belief that he *was* at his mercy—in order to gain the very time that was accorded him. His vexation and rage were meant to show that he *felt* himself foiled, detected, exposed, in danger; that he had no further chance of escape, or means of evasion; and, therefore, that his surrender, at discretion, was a necessity, which he honestly acknowledged and submitted to, however unwillingly. Of course, if he were not conquered, why lose his temper? If he had any other weapons of argument or evasion, why use his tongue—why hint at pistols? Briefly, Travis, however apparently chafed and excited when he left his antagonist, was really quite satisfied with the result of the interview. It did not appear that Inglehardt had made any new discoveries of importance, except the single fact of his having visited old Sinclair and dined at his table; a fact which had its business justification—*public* business too;—and, in respect to all this affair, Travis flattered himself that he had amply baffled the inquisitor.

Three weeks were thus gained! Three weeks, at this particular juncture, and with such plans as he had in meditation,

ripening rapidly for the future, were an eternity! They promised him all the time that he desired. His daughter should *not* be sacrificed to such a cold-blooded and paltry despot! Travis loved his daughter, we may state, quite as fondly as it was in his power to love anything. He would have cheerfully sacrificed his wealth, well or ill acquired, to the happiness of his two children. Let this be taken in allowance, as a human set-off to his otherwise slavish propensity to gain. He was still capable of some sacrifice of *self* for the happiness of another.

Travis had a room at Jack Baltezegar's. When he went thither, from the chamber of Inglehardt, he found certain persons awaiting him on business; for he still acted, it must be remembered, as a sort of sub-commissary of the British army in Carolina. He dined at Baltezegar's and took his way homeward at a moderately early hour in the afternoon. He had ridden some two miles after crossing the Edisto bridge, when he was startled by discovering a stranger suddenly riding out of the woods on his left, and joining him. At first, he did not recognise the new-comer, till the voice of Willie Sinclair made him known. He rejoiced at the meeting. This interview was a necessary part of those maturing plans, by which Travis calculated to foil the cunning and the treachery of Richard Inglehardt. It was an honest welcome, therefore, that he gave to our major of dragoons in the eager speech:—

“Major Sinclair, I am truly glad to see you.”

Travis really desired to see his daughter the wife of Sinclair. He honored the young man—honored his family position, and was right well pleased that his daughter's affections squared so happily with his own projects and desires. The meeting seemed a pleasant omen.

“I have kept my word, Captain Travis.”

“And I will keep mine, sir,” answered the other with earnest emphasis.

“Let us ride into the thicket, sir,” said Sinclair, “and confer at once upon this matter.”

“Why not go home with me? We can talk there in perfect safety.”

“No, sir; I must risk nothing just now! I prefer that our

conference should take place in this wood. It is the safer place."

"Do not show yourself suspicious, Major Sinclair," said the other. "I am dealing with you honorably."

"So I hope, sir—so, indeed, I believe! But caution does not necessarily imply suspicion, Captain Travis, and even if it did, in the present instance, it by no means regards *you* as its object. But I have reason to think that my steps are watched, while at your plantation. I am half inclined to think they are dogged now. And with such a wily enemy as Richard Inglehardt in the neighborhood, as I am told he is, one can not be too vigilant."

"You are right, sir. He is a wily rascal! a liquid serpent, who will glide into the porches of your dwelling, and coil himself in a corner, yet sound no rattle. I have just parted with him, and we have had a long, and, on my side, an angry conference. But I have thrown him off the scent. It will be prudent, indeed, that you should *not* appear, just now, at my plantation. It might undo much that I flatter myself has been well done."

And, thus speaking, Travis followed Sinclair deep into the right-hand wood. The two forced their way forward through its thickest recesses, till they drew rein within a hundred yards of the river. Here they dismounted; and, each holding his bridle by the hand, they prepared to seat themselves upon a fallen tree. Travis had actually found a spot, and had turned his back, about to sit upon the tree, when Sinclair grasped his wrist suddenly, and drew him away.

"What's the matter?"

"Your friend Inglehardt is just behind you."

"The d—l he is!"

He turned and looked where Sinclair pointed, and the crest of a rattlesnake, in his coil, was perceptible, raised directly behind the log where he was about to seat himself. Giving his bridle into the hands of Travis, Sinclair caught up a broken branch and brained the beast at a blow. Then the two seated themselves.

"Well, Major Sinclair," said Travis, "I trust you come pre-

pared to adjust our business. You got my last despatch. You have communicated with General Marion on the subject."

"Yes, sir: I have omitted nothing which could possibly be thought necessary to be known and understood between us, as essential to bringing about the desired consummation of our mutual objects. I understand you to say that you are prepared to ally your fortunes with those of the country—to shake off the connection with the British, and to prove your good faith by putting us in possession of such information as will materially help our cause in future."

"More than this, Major Sinclair, I am possessed of the power to *hurt* as well as *help*—to hurt as seriously as help. I am possessed of proofs of a conspiracy in Charleston to surprise and destroy the British garrison, in that place;—proofs which are so conclusive, that, if once known to Balfour or Rawdon, would bring sixty-three of its best citizens to the gallows. To satisfy you, that I do not speak idly, I need but add that I know that *you yourself have recently communicated with these same citizens within the capital—that you were there three days, concealed, and in disguise; and that you brought away with you a concerted plan of operations which, I suppose, you have either delivered to General Marion, or have still in your possession!* Now, sir, you see that I possess the means of hurt and injury, to as great a degree, as the means of help and service to your cause."

"I would rather, Captain Travis, that you had *not* referred to this power of hurt which you possess;—would rather have had you make a freewill offering of patriotism to your country, however late, growing out of honest sympathies, and proper convictions!"

The rebuke was uttered with cold gravity. Travis felt it, though he was not the man to forego the assertion of all his arguments and resources when a bargain was to be driven. He replied—hastily:—

"Do not mistake me, Major Sinclair. My purpose was not to threaten or annoy, but simply to assure you that I do not make a vain boast, when I tell you of the large value of my information, and of the importance of those services which I can render to your cause, in return for the securities which I demand for the future. I would have you also, individually,

Major Sinclair, be assured of my good faith ; a guaranty for which may be perceived in the countenance which I have given you, tacitly, in your attentions to my daughter."

"Let me entreat you, Captain Travis, to make no reference to your daughter, or to my affections in this business. These are things apart, sacred, to themselves—not to be sullied by calculations of selfishness of any kind—not to be mixed up with the interests of war ; still less to enter into any of the conditions of this present negotiation."

"Well, sir, as you please," answered the other, a little disquieted at this second rebuke, and feeling irked somewhat by the proud and haughty mode in which Sinclair treated every approach to subjects not actually necessary to the consideration of the one topic under view.

"You are somewhat scrupulous and nice in these matters, major, but I don't know but you are right. You will forgive, to a father's anxieties for his daughter's happiness, the allusion which you regard as irrelevant. To our simple business then. What does General Marion say to my propositions?"

"General Marion, you are aware, possesses none but military powers. He approves of all the propositions you make, so far as they fall within his province. But the general scope of your desire renders necessary the consideration of another distinguished person—and there is but one person only who can decide upon it."

"I am fully aware of that ! Well, sir, will *he* see me ? can I have a meeting with *him* in person, sir ?—for it will be to him only, in person, that I will confide my papers—my facts—proofs—"

"Read that billet, Captain Travis," said the major, handing him a scrap of paper—"you are acquainted with the handwriting, and will recognise the signature. You will see that I have forborne nothing toward bringing about the result which I desire equally with yourself—and that the interview will be accorded you. Everything, after that, will depend upon the value of the evidence you offer—that evidence being necessary to inspire the proper degree of faith in your pledges for the future."

The billet, which Travis received and read, ran as follows :—

"If he of H—— D—— [Holly-Dale] is honest, and will speak the truth, giving proof as he promises, he shall have the guaranty which he seeks. I will give him the meeting. See to the arrangements for it as soon as possible. We have reached that stage of the game, when the loss of a pawn may be that of a castle; when the gain, even of a pawn, may enable us to give check-mate to a king!

"J. R."

"It is *his* signature!" said the other musingly. "He will meet me at Holly-Dale—but when?"

This was spoken eagerly, but with an air of considerable satisfaction—not to say exultation. The secret feeling of Travis was, indeed, one of triumph—but it was because of the conviction that he was now in a fair way to shake himself free of Inglehardt, and to achieve the full security of his possessions from the growing power which he began to fear beyond all other—that of the Revolutionists. But Sinclair regarded the expression of his satisfaction with suspicion. He knew not the full extent of Travis's recent fears.

"Captain Travis," said the major of dragoons—"in making the arrangements for this interview, I have not at any moment forgotten that I may be placing in the hands of an enemy, one of the greatest persons in this commonwealth—one who has been the leading spirit of our cause in Carolina, for five years;—one whose loss to us would seriously endanger our cause, at this moment. I have done what most persons would think a very rash thing, knowing what *your* course hitherto has been, I have pledged my honor for your fidelity! Now, mark me, sir; should you betray my pledges—should you abuse the trust reposed in you—should anything happen to this distinguished person, of evil, bonds, or blows, when he comes to this meeting—then, sir, whatever my sympathies for you—however necessarily and earnestly anxious for your safety and happiness, and for the peace and happiness of your family—how dear to me, I will not say!—yet will I put you to death, sir, as unscrupulously as I have brained that venomous serpent lying behind us now! My eye shall be upon you, my hand upon your throat, my weapon at your head, and as there is a God in heaven, let me but see the first sign of treachery

toward that great man, and you die like a dog in your tracks, even though I have to smite you down at the feet of Bertha Travis herself."

A warm flush passed over the whole face of Travis; but he replied frankly:—

"And you would be right, sir! As there is a God in heaven, my purpose is honest. I deal in good faith with you. *He* shall come to no harm. No! Major Sinclair, if on *your* account only—he shall be safe at my hands. Ah! sir—if you would only suffer me to say that, regarding you as one who is so precious to my child, your honor is as dear to me as hers!"

"Enough, sir! I am willing to believe you. I have shown this in the pledges I have made for you. But we have so much at stake—so much depends upon the safety of that one man's life, in the present crisis of our fortunes—that the most confiding nature will feel misgivings. Forgive me that I have felt it due to myself to utter threats and warnings which must be offensive. I will utter no more. We understand each other."

Travis grasped his hand. They sat for some minutes both in profound silence. At length—

"When shall we have this meeting?" inquired Travis. "The sooner the better. Inglehardt has pushed me to a certain extremity. If not relieved within three weeks, Bertha must become his wife."

"Ha! Bertha his wife! Never! never!"

"Amen!—God knows I would sooner make any sacrifice to prevent such a marriage. But it is to this meeting that I must look for safety."

"Within *three days* you shall have it—here, at Holly-Dale and Heaven speed it to fortunate issues! You must confide, Mr. Travis, in the simple words of the person you will meet! Do not you be too suspicious, too exacting! He is not the man with whom to drive a bargain. Unfold yourself—deliver yourself frankly, and leave it to his magnanimity to afford you even more than you desire in return. These papers!—you have them safe against possibility of loss."

"Safe as the grave! They shall be forthcoming—all! But how shall we communicate?"

"Leave that to me! I shall contrive it. I may send you a

messenger. He shall utter but a single word to you, which shall prove his authority to communicate. That word is——”

The sentence was finished in a whisper.

“Very good,” said the other—“and now, Major Sinclair, will you give us any time at Holly-Dale?”

“Perhaps!” with a slight smile. “But it will be well that *you* should know nothing of my visits. It will make it easier for you to deny that I have been at your plantation. You will need to keep up appearances with Inglehardt. See him every day, if possible. Play your game out with him fearlessly. He is one of those subtle scoundrels, full of trick and manœuvre, whom nothing can baffle but an open game. How many men has he at the village?”

“Less than twenty, I think, and all raw recruits. You might crack all their crowns, and capture him at a dash, with a small company.”

“Ay, I might! But the attempt might peril our present object—occasion alarm—and bring down the British upon us. They are rapidly moving down from Ninety-Six. We must risk nothing now unnecessarily. It may be well, too, were you to prepare your family for sudden flight across the Santee. If Inglehardt becomes troublesome, the region will be safe for neither you nor them as soon as the British army moves into the precinct. They will probably take post at the village, and Greene will push them if he can. Judge for yourself what your danger will be, if Inglehardt gets any inkling of your present course. He is pressing you, you say. That proves him suspicious already. Take warning, and be prepared, as soon as you are threatened, to send your family off, and bury your negroes in the swamp. Are you doubtful of any of them? Inglehardt is the very man to employ your domestics as spies upon you.”

The other answered gravely—

“I have sometimes thought of that, and feared it; for it is difficult, otherwise, to account for the information that he sometimes obtains. I visited your father sometime ago, and took every precaution, and a circuitous route, in seeking the Barony; yet, though laid up with his wound at the time, Inglehardt knew it all.”

"Be heedful of this danger. Your domestics must be watched narrowly. It is because I doubt *them*, that I would not willingly be seen at Holly-Dale. Besides, I believe myself to be tracked by an enemy's scout."

"Who?"

"Hell-fire Dick, and perhaps others of his gang."

"Why, Dick is, or was, one of Inglehardt's own troop; but he deserted and went over to General Marion."

"From whom he has also deserted—by whom he is outlawed."

"And you think him on your track?"

"It is probable! I have thrown him out, I believe; but, of these things, one can not be certain. At all events, I change my quarter nightly, and always keep ahead, using the running water, as frequently as I can, for washing my horse's hoofs. I shall cross the river to night."

"Have you any support at hand?"

"I think so. To-night will determine."

Much more was said between the parties, dealing with the details of their respective progresses; but these need not delay us in ours. The two separated toward dusk, having adjusted their more important objects, but engaged to meet, at about the same time next day, in the same neighborhood.

When fairly dark, Sinclair ventured upon a doubtful ford across the river, which, as the water was low, enabled him to pass without difficulty. On the other side, knowing his route thoroughly, he made his way upward, some two miles, and, having reached a certain designated spot, he wound his bugle, and was delighted to hear an answering blast, only a few moments after. It was not long before he was joined by 'Bram, his faithful negro.

'Bram had a long story to tell of *his* own progress, and that of Jim Ballou, portions of which we are already in possession of. For the rest, we may briefly state that "Hell-fire Dick" had kept the track of Sinclair unerringly, until Turkey Hill was reached; when, somehow, the hounds were at fault, thrown out by a nice little bit of practice which the partisan had indulged in. Whether the scouts had recovered the trail, the negro could not say, nor could he report where they were.

Jim Ballou had kept him at watch upon Holly-Dale, to which he crossed in the morning, recrossing again at night. Ballou himself was still off scouting somewhere.

After a long and satisfactory conference with the negro, Sinclair followed him down to the river, where he found a canoe which 'Bram had appropriated from a neighboring plantation. Leaving the latter to stable his horse in the swamp thickets for the present, our major of dragoons paddled himself across the river, to the "Holly-Dale" tract which lay directly opposite.

He had been expected. Bertha Travis and her brother, Henry, welcomed him at the landing.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SCENES AT HOLLY-DALE.

"'Twas my desire to prepare you for
The entertainment. Be but pleased to obscure
Yourself behind these hangings a few minutes."

CHAPMAN AND SHIRLEY.

OUR little group of three seated themselves on the river bluff, Henry Travis sitting at the feet of the lovers, and Bertha's hand grasped by that of Sinclair. Very sweet was the situation to all the parties. The night air was soft and pleasantly cool, coming up from the river. The stream swept by, darkly bright, with a gentle murmur as it went, chafing against roots of cypress, and bending branches of oak and willow, that trailed down into the water. There was no moon yet, but the stars were shining gayly and numerously down, their pale gleams dropping about the group through the great roof of trees under which they sat, and which crowned the little promontory, even where it overhung the river.

That silly sweet prattle of lovers! How idle to shrewish ears! That enumeration of little ridiculous dreams and hopes, so childishly little, when heard by third persons, which amply satisfy the minds of the interested parties, no matter how wise. For love is verily a little child—so full of faith, so full of wisdom in its simplicity, finding so much of compensation in its life of trifles; finding life itself so busy and full of work, even when given up to the most unperforming revery. We will not seek to repeat the little nothings of which its speech is so full, assured that the situation is sufficiently satisfactory, though the speech be silly.

Willie Sinclair, strong man as he is; man of thought and action, purpose and performance; honest patriot and brave

partisan ; he, too, like the lovely creature with whose fingers his own paddled, could have dreamed away the livelong night in the pleasant commerce, but that there was that stern monitor called duty at his elbow, which kept up a continual undersong of exhortation, muttering in his ears at every period—

“This is no *time*
To play with mamnets and to tilt with lips.”

He started up, at length, impetuously, and with the air of one desperately shaking himself free from a pleasant thralldom.

“Bertha, I must away. I have work before me of a pressing sort. I must get writing materials. I have to despatch 'Bram on a mission within an hour. Can I get to the house unseen, where I may write a letter?”

“Why must you hurry, Willie? I thought you had a little respite now.”

This was said reproachfully.

“Faith, so I said—and truly, a very little respite. But a single hour with you, Bertha, is a very precious blessing in a jewel's compass. I must be content with just so little, now, in order that we may secure a longer time hereafter. But the business now is pressing.”

“You are always so eager to begone, Willie.”

“Ah! you are so jealous, Bertha. But it does not vex me that you are so.”

And he laughed and caught her in his arms, and kissed her, and she pouted prettily.

“Kiss her again, major,” said Henry,—“I'm sure she rather likes it, though she does push you off and grumble.”

And the boy clapped his hands at the result of his suggestion, Sinclair dutifully doing as he was bidden, and getting soundly slapped for his offence. Bertha Travis was, you see, something of a rustic, and knew not exactly how to resist an impertinence, which came in disguise of a tribute.

“You see what I've got for listening to you.”

“I reckon, major, you'd risk the slap over and over again for the kiss. But I wouldn't.”

“Hush, you!” said the sister; “your impudence grows faster than your shoulders. But, Willie, must you be going?”

"I must: but I need first the materials for writing a letter. It is your father's business, Bertha, rather than mine. Now, dearest, if I could make my way to the house, unseen by the servants, slip into your father's office, and write a letter—"

"It can be done. Henry can go before and whistle to you if all's clear. We can steal round the kitchen, under cover of the garden-wall, which is shady with evergreens, and the office is in the basement. And mother wants to see you, Willie. She can come down to you in the office."

"Yes—to be sure: but do not let your father know that I am there. Not that he will not know—at least suspect—and approve; but that he must not be burdened with an unnecessary fact, about which he may hereafter be questioned by that arch rascal Inglehardt."

It was arranged that Henry Travis should go ahead, and see that the land was clear, while the two followed slowly after. His whistle was the signal to time their paces and regulate their course. The boy was already something of a woodsman and scout, and delighted at every sort of employment which exercised his faculty. He stretched away as soon as apprized of what he was to do. How the lovers loitered on, hand in hand, whispering what grateful nonsense, we may conjecture. Enough to report their arrival beneath the shadow of the dwelling, in the right basement of which Travis kept his office. A door opened upon the yard in the rear of the office, and here Henry stood and gave them admission, closing the entrance after them. A tallow (*dipped*) candle burned upon the table, which was covered with books and papers. Travis was a reader of books, of which he had a tolerable English collection of that day, some of them standards even to ours. He was a busy man, too, as a British commissariat, and hence a multitude of papers, calculations, memoranda, reports, &c. He was up stairs, companioning his wife. When Henry came to his father for the key of his office, the latter was about to ask him for what he wished it—as the application was somewhat unusual—but with the promptness of an older wit, the boy anticipated him:—

"Don't ask me any questions, papa. You know I shall not do any mischief."

The father in a moment suspected the nature of his secret. The mother asked :—

“Where’s your sister, Henry?”

He looked at her significantly, and said :—

“She’s at the office door outside, waiting for me to open for her.”

The father instantly handed the key to the boy, who, snatching up the only candle burning in the hall, hurried down to let in the two lovers, leaving his excellent parents in the dark.

“The thoughtless scamp!” said the father.

The mother said :—

“Never mind the light. We can talk as well in the dark as with the candle. Have you any idea what he’s after, Travis?”

“Yes!”

“Ah!—are all things going right, my husband?”

“I hope so. They promise well! They are in a fair train for it.”

“Heaven speed it—and send us out of this painful bondage. I trust we shall never again be cursed with the sight of Richard Inglehardt.”

“That we can hardly hope for, my dear—certainly, we must endure it a little while longer; but I hope not too long. We shall probably see him again, and we must keep up appearances, Lucy, until we are able to bid him defiance.”

“You are of course aware that Sinclair is in the neighborhood—has been on the plantation?”

“Yes; but the less I know of this the better. I suspect that he is below at this very moment, but I would not willingly be assured of it. You may ascertain if you will, but tell me nothing of it. I suppose that Bertha will let you know anon.”

At that moment the girl’s steps were heard coming through the passage-way, a flight of stairs leading up from the basement through the centre of the building. She found her way to her mother in the dark, and whispered in her ears. Then she lighted a candle.

“Bertha,” said the father—“have the windows of the office been securely shut in for the night?”

The precaution had been taken by Sinclair, to have this done before he entered. Meanwhile, Mrs. Travis rose, and with her daughter went to the pantry.

"I'll venture anything, Bertha, you never thought of giving him any supper."

"Indeed, mother, I did not."

"As if love was sufficient support for a major of dragoons. I think it just as likely as not, the poor fellow hasn't had a mouthful for twenty-four hours."

Bertha was full of regrets and self-reproaches.

"Never mind, you shall amend your fault. Get out the ham; there's some johnny-cake put up; and the fish Henry caught to-day are fried and in the safe. Step out and bring them in. Your father can go off to bed, and we'll bring the major in here. He can take his supper in the pantry. Have everything ready, while I step down and have a talk with him. You've had him to yourself long enough."

Meanwhile, our major of dragoons, had written out his despatches, whatever they were. He had just finished, and sealed them, when Mrs. Travis joined him in the office. When she appeared, and pronounced his name, he started up, and, with as natural a grace and ease, as if he had done the thing repeatedly before, he threw his arms about the matron's neck, and inflicted a smart kiss upon her lips.

"Bless me, Major Sinclair," said the lady, recovering from the salute—"It is well Bertha does not see you—she might take it amiss."

"But Bertha *does* see you, you wicked couple," cried the girl, making her appearance at the same moment; "you erred, mother, in leaving me so little to do up-stairs."

"Well, major, since we are so closely watched, you will see that you time your kisses more seasonably, and when there shall be no jealous eyes upon us."

"Ah! my dear Mrs. Travis—mother that is to be—we might apprehend from Bertha's jealousy were she to be utterly shared out."

"What! you don't mean to say that you are in the habit of kissing my daughter—Bertha!"

"Fie! Willie! You know that such a thing happens very rarely."

"A major of dragoons," said the mother shrewdly, "is certainly the last person in the world to indulge in such a prac-

tice, except as mere matter of duty. But now that we have all had our kisses, I propose, Major Sinclair, that you step up to the pantry, and take a little cold supper. I fancy that you get as little good food now-a-days as kisses. Bertha has got together everything in the house that is eatable."

"Ah! she is thoughtful of me. I confess to an appetite."

"Oh!" said the girl with a blush—"it is mother who has been considerate. I confess I never once thought of your mere mortal appetites."

"While feeding on my heart you never felt for my hunger."

"What a superb Spanish sort of speech. But come up, and eat."

"Where's Mr. Travis?"

"He will not be in the way."

"The appeal is irresistible. I confess that I am one of that class of lovers, who never lose appetite. A sigh never relieves my hunger. The recollection of my lady's eyes rarely moves me to an indifference for food;—even a kiss, dear Bertha, never lessens my taste for ham and eggs, chickens and salad. I will look into your pantry with a will. But I have little time for pleasures of this sort, and I must swallow as fiercely as an Edisto raftsmen. I must be across the river again in an hour."

"So soon, Willie?"

"Yes; my business will admit of no delay. I must send 'Bram on a journey to-night. Where's Henry?"

The boy answered from the outside of the door.

"Run down, Henry, to the landing and wind this bugle, three short *mots*, and then come back. This will bring 'Bram down to the river, where he will wait me. And now for the cold meats."

The boy sped on his errand, and the rest of the party adjourned up-stairs to the pantry, where Bertha had spread out everything with the natural nicety with which a damsel does everything for her lover. There was the ham, not over-deeply cut into, there the dish of perch, cold but very appetizing, there were some fragments of chicken; a plate of corn *johnny*-cake; a tray of pickles, cucumbers and melons;—and a decanter of old Jamaica.

"If you would wait a while, major, till we could get you a bowl of coffee—"

"Not for the world, my dear Mrs. Travis—all this suffices, amply—meets all my desires—and I frankly confess to you that my hunger was beginning to rage. It is not often that I see so good a table, and recently, I have eaten little—nothing half so good since I have been on the Edisto. A *snack* at Kit Rowe's did but whet and stimulate the appetite which has had no supply since."

Willie Sinclair had no affectations. His was one of those hearty, whole-souled spontaneous natures, which frankly deliver their true characteristics—having no strategic tendencies in morals—few or no reserves in respect to their own moods—simply because there is no secret consciousness perpetually prompting concealment. He slashed away at the ham, tore the chicken asunder, swallowed pickle after pickle, as men of sanguine temperament are apt to do, and washed down his edibles with a copious draught of Jamaica, and this without mincing the matter, without any delicate hesitation, and scrupulous nicety because of the presence of his mistress. And, we do not scruple to say further—we have no desire for any peevish suppression of the truth, in deference to canting delicacy—and therefore state frankly that Bertha Travis herself was persuaded to take the wing of a chicken between the fingers of one hand and a fragment of johnny-cake in the other, and, for a part of the time at least, to keep her lover company in his pleasant performances. And we give it as our sober opinion, that love—happy love we mean—always begets an appetite—i. e., among all sensible and Christian people!

Suddenly, even while Sinclair ate and prattled with the ladies, the sound of horses' feet was heard in the court below; and Henry Travis dashed into the apartment crying:—

"To cover, Major Willie, there are troopers without, all in armor."

"I have not finished!" quoth Sinclair, coolly snatching up the ham-bone and the bottle of Jamaica, and, chewing as he went, he followed Bertha down stairs into the office, while Henry Travis proceeded to open for the strangers whose raps were now audible at the entrance.

And who were these unexpected visitors but Richard Inglehardt and a portion of his crew?

That subtle engineer, who had not for some time seen Mistress Bertha Travis, had suddenly bethought him that he might wisely put himself in the way of Fortune, having put such a spoke into her wheel during his late negotiations with Captain Travis. At all events, he had resolved to make a sudden visit to see how his schemes had worked—to see if he could, by close deciphering of the faces of the damsel and her father, ascertain the effect upon her of the communications of the latter. Had he communicated the arrangement made between themselves? How had she received it? Was she resigned to her fate, and would these three allowed weeks find him at the close the master of it? No wonder he was curious. The maiden was a rare prize, and he hungered for its possession. We may add that, never wholly assured of the father's good faith, he was not quite free from a lurking suspicion that nothing had as yet been done. His purpose was threefold—to take in a draught of beauty at the eyes, in anticipation of his future hopes—to see for himself if there had been any progress in the matter—and to goad the reluctant Travis to the performance of his hateful task. Satisfied that the father held it to be a hateful task, he could readily believe that he would work at it very slowly. It was, perhaps, just as well that he should be made to feel the spur in his sides.

Never for a moment did Richard Inglehardt suppose that, just when he rode up to the dwelling, his lucky rival was at full feast, of eyes and mouth in the pantry, with the lady of his love.

Captain Travis, though he had left the field to Sinclair, and retired to his chamber, had, fortunately, not retired for the night. He had heard the sounds of the troopers as soon as Henry Travis, and made his way down stairs, not a little anxious, in season to welcome Inglehardt at the entrance. That subtle swordfish came in alone, having left his troopers, who were simply rough-riding rangers, to keep watch in the court below, and cool their restiveness by the contemplation of the quiet stars, always supposing that such people may occasionally incline to look upward.

Of course, Captain Travis was courtlily gracious, and in civil terms enough welcomed his unwelcome visitor. They entered the

parlor together, where they found good Mrs. Travis, sitting calmly in her rustic rocker, made of oak-staves, with a square of undressed oxhide stretched across the seat, the mottled hair, white and black, outside. And she was civil enough in her welcome; and Inglehardt had no reason to complain. He thought the old lady rather stiff and stately in her reception, but this might be due to the uneasy working of the hinges of age—the stiffness might be in the joints rather than the soul; though he confessed to himself, while only forming this supposition, that, at no period, could he have flattered himself with the belief that the good lady had ever shown herself cordial in her deportment, while in his presence.

Whatever Inglehardt thought or felt, he never suffered himself to lose the quiet, easy, subdued, deliberate, and very gracious manner which usually characterized his bearing. His genuflections were profound and graceful, his smile the most benignant, and when he took the lady's hand, and inquired after her well-being, it was with the air of a dutiful and devoted son, all reverence and solicitude; and taking his seat beside her, he drew his box from one pocket, fed his nostril gingerly—followed the feeding by the use of his kerchief—a genuine “Injy,” which he drew from the other, restored both to their places again, and renewed his remark, with singularly sweet *empressement*, upon the admirable keeping in which he found his amiable hostess.

But Bertha Travis was nowhere to be seen. He sweetly insinuated his wishes for her health—which were construed naturally into an inquiry for her presence—and was told that she had retired for the night—the hour was late—no guests were expected;—Captain Travis, by the latter remark, meaning to convey the idea that, could it have been foreseen that the house was to be honored with the presence of so distinguished a visiter, the damsel would not have disappeared so early. And with this pleasant insinuation, Master Inglehardt was compelled to be content. And the conversation flagged.

After a-while, Captain Inglehardt, apologizing sweetly to Mrs. Travis, begged to see her spouse on public business, in private, and in his office. Travis, without knowing how Sinclair had been disposed of, and feeling not a little anxious for

the subject, was yet unable to evade this requisition. His wife would have retired, giving up the parlor to her guest and husband; but this Inglehardt would by no means permit; and Travis had no ready subterfuge by which to escape the necessity of taking his visiter, down stairs, "on public business," to that office whither it had been always usual with them to go on such occasions. So, seizing a candle, almost desperately, and making as much bustle as he well could, without exciting suspicion, he led the way for the unwelcome guest.

The office was wholly in darkness. All was silent there. Where was Sinclair? was the mental query of Travis. Had he got off in the face of the troopers without? If not, where could he be? There was a rude settee in the apartment upon which Inglehardt subsided with an air of graceful negligence. Could Sinclair have been forced to take shelter, under the *form* which sustained his enemy? If so, Travis felt for the mortifications of the man whose proud spirit he knew, and whom he desired for his son-in-law! But, casting an anxious glance about the room, the father of Bertha caught a glimpse of the door, ajar, which opened into a closet occupying that portion of the passage way, which lay beneath the stairflight into the second story. If not gone, he felt it probable that our major of dragoons was sheltered there amidst wines and liquors, and any number of demijohns and bottles. These, he remembered, crowded the shelves to the very edges, and covered the floor, leaving precious little space for the movements of a restless person. Our commissary felt exceedingly uneasy. A single incautious movement, of the occupant, if concealed there, might tumble a dozen bottles from their spheres, and he might be witness to some such scene as that in which Hamlet administers to Polonius through the arras. Travis was half disposed to think that Inglehardt's visit, so late, so unexpected, was only made in consequence of his suspicions. Had he been furnished with any clues? had the spies upon his steps, of whom Sinclair had spoken, followed the trail to his dwelling? Had the espionage which he had long felt to be maintained upon himself, made and reported the discovery of Sinclair's presence? Well might he be anxious. His secret—nay, his fate, hung upon a single hair.

But Travis was an old soldier, and a pretty cool politician. Whatever he felt, he yet contrived to appear perfectly unconcerned and indifferent.

"Well, Inglehardt," he said, with an air of frankness, "you have news, I'm sure. You are not the man to ride at night without a burden. What have you heard?"

The other answered gently and slowly.

"Nay," said he, "will you not credit me with the anxious feeling of a lover who would gaze occasionally upon the beautiful star which is to crown his destiny? Is it not enough that my star is the jewel of your house?"

"Pshaw! You are not the person to fatigue yourself with love-making. I know you too well for that. What are your tidings?"

"Faith, but you do me wrong, my dear captain. Sentiment is my infirmity. Love is my weakness. The eagerness of my passion alone compels me here, and I feel a signal disappointment in not being able to see the creature of my devotions. Verily, you might have expected me. After our conference, in which I showed you fully the intensity of my passion, you could scarcely have expected me to keep away. Ah!—do tell me what progress you have made?"

The other answered bluntly and truly:—

"None as yet! I have not even broached the subject to wife or daughter. I felt too much like a coward. I had not the courage for it. It is not an agreeable duty, Captain Inglehardt, to repeat to their ears, the terrible language you have thrust into mine."

"Ah!—but it must be done, Captain Travis!" said the other, with a contemptuous coolness, and he took snuff after the speech.

"Ay! Of course! It must be done; but though I know this, I do not the less feel how painful is the necessity. And it *shall* be done, Captain Inglehardt. You have my promise, but you must leave it to me to decide the when and the how. I must seize a favorable moment for it. I have three weeks remember."

"Less some thirty-six hours! I will not bate one moment of the limit."

"I know you for a terrible tyrant, as I have told you, and, by Heaven, Inglehardt, if I saw any way to escape you, I should a thousand times prefer to defy you to the teeth, than sacrifice that dear child to your desires."

"Sacrifice! Pooh! pooh! Travis;—what silly, inappropriate words you use. How should there be any sacrifice? Your safety is something, and I flatter myself that I am as proper a person to render your daughter happy as any captain you could find. But you desire, possibly, a higher rank for your son-in-law. Well, our union of forces will secure that also. We shall see. Though I care nothing for the distinction myself, yet, to satisfy you, I shall put myself in the way of a colonelcy."

"Do *that*!" said Travis with energy.

"Well—it shall be done."

"But your news? You have had some intelligence?"

"Y-e-s!" drawlingly, "we are to have three more regiments from Ireland; Cornwallis is to return from Virginia, bringing Arnold with him, and we shall finish the rebels at a blow in Georgia and the Carolinas. It needs but this to bring about negotiations for peace. Congress is worn out, and prepared to make terms for the Northern Colonies, giving up the Carolinas and Georgia, which, with Florida and the Southwest territory, will leave the Crown in possession of the richest of its provinces—worth all the rest to her commerce, There! Isn't that a plentiful budget?"

"If true! But how do you get it?"

"From Charleston. It comes from a sure hand. It comprises Balfour's latest intelligence."

"Heaven send it to be true! Yet, will Great Britain be willing to yield so much to Congress, with the certainty of continual insurrection here, stimulated by a republic alongside."

"There will be no insurrection here. It is to be a war of extermination waged upon the rebels, till the whole race is extinct. The conquerors will be put in possession, and a new plan of colonization will fill up the vacant places with the loyal people. You perceive a sufficient motive in the prospect for present and future fidelity."

"I have never wanted motive for this."

"To be sure not," said the other with a smile, which was a

sneer. "At all events, this intelligence will furnish sufficient motive for sundry who are shaking in the wind, deceived by the apparent successes of the rebel partisans."

"Very true," said the other musingly.

Travis was not deceived by this intelligence. He not only knew it to be an invention—a lie throughout—but he knew it to be the invention of Inglehardt himself. Travis, who had his own emissaries in the village, knew that, unless within the last eight hours, Inglehardt had received no such intelligence up to their last interview. Carelessly insinuating the question as to the period when he got his despatches, Inglehardt inadvertently answered—"This morning." The other said no more. The conversation became desultory, and finally flagged, both parties beginning to show decided symptoms of weariness.

"I must ride," at length said Inglehardt. "A stoup of your Jamaica, Travis; this day's work has enfeebled me."

The requisition filled Travis once more with uneasiness. It was one which Inglehardt rarely made. Could he have any suspicions of that closet beneath the stairs? He knew that it was there the liquors were kept. But there were no means of evasion. Any hesitation, or delay, would probably confirm the suspicions of the other if any were entertained; and Travis rose promptly and proceeded to the closet, the door of which he opened carefully and no wider than was necessary for the admission of his person. Judge of his momentary consternation when he discovered not only the major of dragoons, but Bertha Travis, within its shelter; his movement, on opening the door—which opened within—having the effect of forcing them into the closest relations. As he entered, Bertha thrust the square black-bottle—in which the Jamaica of that day was usually found most portable—into his grasp. He was saved the trouble of finding it. He withdrew with it promptly, drawing the door closely behind him. But now, another dilemma awaited him. He had the rum, and the tumblers, and these were planted upon the table near the unwelcome guest; but the water was above stairs. To leave Inglehardt alone, even for a moment, was a peril. His papers were strewn about the table. He rapidly asked himself whether there was anything in them to compromise him. A tricky politician never feels

himself quite safe. He knew that Inglehardt had as few scruples as himself, and, then, he might take it into his head to look into the closet. But he had no escape from this new necessity, and, groaning in spirit as he went, he hurried upstairs for the water.

Sinclair readily conceived all the dangers of his own situation as certainly as did Travis; but he got his *couteau de chasse* in readiness, and felt that even strife would be a grateful relief from a position, in which, though with an arm about his beloved, he had stiffened from constraint. He had shifted the burden of his body from one leg to the other, until both were weary. And he weighed little short of two hundred. But Inglehardt never looked at the closet. He, however, did not hesitate at a rapid glance at the papers on the table, which only ceased as he heard Travis approaching from above.

"The dirty rascal!" muttered Sinclair to himself, as through the crack of the door he witnessed the transaction. The next moment Travis made his appearance, and the two drank together, the potation of Travis rendered necessary from the excitement he felt, exceeding thrice in quantity that taken by his companion. Then, slowly, to the last, Inglehardt took his departure, Travis carefully seeing him beyond the dwelling, and to his horse.

"What a tedious scoundrel!" exclaimed Sinclair, emerging from the closet, and leading out Bertha. "Cold and conceited, isn't it wonderful that such a fellow should have any of the qualities of the soldier? Yet he has: he can plan well; is cunningly clever, and prompt enough to blows on most occasions; but he lacks one warlike essential—one of the most essential for a dragoon. He is wanting in impulse; is deficient in celerity. What a lover he must be—eh, Bertha? Did he take snuff between the sentences when he was making love to you?"

"Ah! he never got so far as that."

"A snake in the grass! Subtle, sly, venomous, and deliberate. I am curious to think how the encounter between us shall take place. I know that it *will* come—but how? Heaven speed it be in the open daylight, in the broad field, with Heaven looking on; and, if Heaven pleases, with no other spectators. I should dread that he should creep near me in the darkness,

while I slept, sheltering his sliding, spotty carcass under innocent leaves and flowers."

Travis reappeared.

"Is the coast clear, sir?" asked Sinclair.

He was answered by Henry Travis, who hastily reappeared.

"All right, Major Willie—they're out of the avenue by this time."

"What! not a-bed, boy?" said the father. "And what have you got here?—my pistols, as I live! Are they loaded, boy?"

"To the muzzle, sir. I thought they had found out the major, and that I might have to take a crack at 'em."

"Faith, Captain Travis, I shall have to ask you for both your children," said Sinclair, lifting the boy up in his muscular arms, and kissing him.

"Don't be jealous, Bertha," said the saucy urchin—"you shall have it as soon as he's gone."

"I shan't wait for that, saucybox," said the girl, slapping him on one cheek, while kissing the other. Sinclair announced the necessity for his immediate departure, and took Bertha by the hand. Her father felt a sudden impulse to examine his papers; and, during this study, our major atoned, upon *her* lips, for the outrage committed upon her brother's. Then she slipped out of the room and up-stairs without rousing a single echo; and, if she slept without dreaming that night, it was not because of the absence of very pleasant fancies. A parting stoup of the Jamaica was hastily swallowed by our dragoon, and he disappeared—a few words as he left being sufficient to establish an understanding between himself and Travis, for future meeting. Henry *would* go with him down to the river and see him across in the boat. The boy would have given his favorite pony to have been permitted to cross also. In another hour, Sinclair had despatched, by Abram, the missive which he had encountered so much risk to prepare. Of course, the black was properly schooled in his duties, and perfectly understood what was to be done. His task implied a canter of ten or twelve miles that night.

"But where is Ballou?" was Sinclair's query to himself, as he prepared to occupy the forest-camp of the negro, his good steed being his only companion. "The fellow must be very

busy—on a warm trail—or—which is most likely—must be drunk again!”

But our major was quite too tired for much reflection, and soon delivered himself up to sleep. We must not omit to state that he had not sent 'Bram off without his supper, having brought with him the ham-bone and bread which he had so hastily appropriated, from the pantry of Mrs. Travis, when the alarm was given by the steeds of Inglehardt and his party.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE RIVAL SPIDERS.

"Things well begun
Are half performed : the managing an act
With close and hidden practice, 'mongst the wise
And politic people, brings assured success :
Broad open way the heavy snail doth take,
While untrod paths best please the subtle snake."

GLASSTHORNE'S *Wallenstein*.

It was long after midnight when 'Bram returned to his master in the camp. But he had performed his mission successfully, and brought back a written answer, partly in cipher, which Sinclair read by firelight, and which proved satisfactory.

"But what of Ballou, 'Bram?"

The negro could give no account of the scout.

"'Speck he 'tretch out somewhay in de bush, drunk like a gempleman."

Our major painfully admitted to himself this probability; he well knew the scout's weakness, and feared that he had fallen into a temptation which had proved too great for his resolves.

"And lawd, maussa, ef you bin yerry how he sway to God nebber for touch whiskey an' rum any more 'gen. But he lub 'em so."

"Well, since he fails us, 'Bram, we shall only have to do double duty ourselves. Don't let me sleep a moment after daylight. I must ride down to Kit Rowe's by peep of day. To sleep now, old fellow."

With dawn he was up and mounted.

"Keep your eyes about you, 'Bram, while I am absent. You can push the boat across the river and scout about Holly-Dale. Henry Travis will meet you by the swamp cedars, and bring

you something to eat. I shall probably be with you after dark, in the camp, mind you. We can cross in the canoe."

And shaking the negro's hand, as if he had been a bosom friend, our major of dragoons took his way down along the edge of the river swamp, until he reached the ford where he had previously crossed the stream, when he boldly pressed through it as before. On the opposite side he sped along with a free rein, meeting nobody, and possibly escaping all eyes, at that early hour of the morning. But he kept under cover as much as possible, passing below the bridge until he found himself nearly opposite to Rowe's plantation. Here, after a little search, he found, closely hidden away in the thickly-massed forest which crowded down to the edge of the stream, a little dug-out, with a negro boy in it asleep. He routed up the urchin, who was evidently set to wait for him—not watch—and stripping his horse of his saddle, and loosing his neck-chain, he led the steed by the bridle to the water, and entering the boat, bade the boy push across; the horse, never fearing, taking the water like a dog of Newfoundland, and swimming beside the dug-out. The steed concealed in the swamp thickets, and the boy left in charge of the boat, Sinclair, after sundry precautions, made his way up toward the settlement, giving his bugle a slight blast which brought Rowe out to him in the thicket.

"Have you heard of Dick Coulter and his troop?" was the first question of Sinclair.

"He was at Chevilette's last night, and is no doubt plying about in the swamp between his place and Barton's."

"Good! I must have him up to-morrow by three o'clock in the afternoon. Can you give him a whistle?"

"It shall be done. Where must he find cover?"

"At Holly-Dale, west of the road, out of sight, but ready bitted, for a charge at the first blast of the bugle. Has anything more been gathered touching the recruits of Travis?"

"I counted twenty-six at drill, yesterday."

"How many has Coulter?"

"Not more than nineteen last night, but some were out scouting."

"Has Ballou been here?"

"No! I thought I heard his horn blow down by the negro

quarter last evening, as I rode up from Chevillette's, but I have seen nothing of him."

"He is either drunk in a hollow, or on a hot trail. I need him now, and we shall be pushed for time. Greene's advance will probably pass Rawdon to-morrow night."

"Ah! and his lordship?"

"Is making for Orangeburg as a fox makes for his hole with thirty dogs at his heels. The heat is playing old Harry with his men, and his Irish are ready to break out in mutiny."

"Good! What of Stewart and Cruger?"

"Nothing positive: but they are on the road also, pushing downward with the whole tory settlement of Ninety-Six, bag and baggage along with him, and Pickens at his heels with his mounted rangers—too few to cut him up, yet too hungry not to follow. But you must get me some breakfast out here. I have a famous dragoon appetite this morning."

"There's no stranger on the place or about. Can't you venture up to the house?"

"No! I can risk nothing unnecessarily now—I have a life depending on my vigilance and safety, which is worth an army to us."

We will not pursue our major of dragoons for the present, satisfied that he wishes concealment, and that he will be active. Let us look in, for a moment, upon Richard Inglehardt.

He was taking his breakfast, a somewhat late one, at the table of the widow Bruce. All the other lodgers—they were few—had breakfasted and gone. The widow presided at the table and watched her guest, as, somewhat more abstractedly than usual, he broke his bread and sipped his coffee. Inglehardt seldom showed himself in a contemplative mood; but he was evidently somewhat heedless of the lady's presence at this moment. Mrs. Bruce was a lady of dignity, stately and reserved, herself, but with that sort of pride which demands that others shall pay tribute of confidence and solicitude. She did not much admire Inglehardt. She knew him as obscure of family, the son of an overseer, and he a man of little force of character. But Inglehardt *had made himself*, and this proved him in possession of native endowments which, properly exercised, would give him means of power, and moral power is *per*

se a virtue. Richard Inglehardt was not a person to be despised—not a person, however, to be loved—by the Widow Bruce he was not even admired. Did she fear him? not exactly. It would be difficult to say through what agency he coerced her respect. It was not a respect accorded to him through any social consideration. His social position was doubtful and his manners were bad. But even his manners were significant of latent powers. He was so cool—so assured—so seemingly indifferent as to the results of the game—so equal to it, as it was ordinarily played—that those who could not analyze the source of the possession were yet able to recognise it. It was something, therefore, to inspire curiosity, to perceive this man apparently forgetful, absorbed, heedless of the things around him, and, for once, *natural*, and so far *human*, therefore, as to betray a consciousness of such relations with the world about him, as to take him completely out of his indifference. He whose thoughts make him forgetful of the absolute presence in which he stands, shows himself in some degree the subject of fortune. He is not superior to fate. It is working in his brain, or in his heart, so as to inspire a care—an anxiety.

Why should Richard Inglehardt be so anxious at the present moment, as to forget his affectations—forget his usual manner, and show himself heedless of the very person in whose presence he sits? Such a man rarely betrays any heedlessness of those about him. He is always watchful of the world as if he knows that it is full of enemies or—victims. It is only those who sympathize with humanity who ever forget their vigilance.

“I should say, Captain Inglehardt,” quoth the widow, “that you were meditating some enterprise of more than usual difficulty.”

There was something of pique in the tone of the lady, the fruit, perhaps, of his failure to note her presence.

“Did you speak, Mrs. Bruce?” he answered, somewhat quickly, but looking up still absently.

“Is it love or war, Captain Inglehardt?”

“Love, madam!”

“Ay, sir; I ask if it be love or war that now exercises your strategic faculties? You are evidently busy in some scheme of more than common embarrassment.”

He shook his head as if to shake it free of thought, and answered slowly, resuming his deliberateness of speech and manner.

"Yes, madam, I am to sup shortly with the devil, and my spoon is not quite long enough for my purposes."

And with these words he coolly rose and left the room, a little vexed with himself that he should forget himself, in his anxieties, in the presence of another.

"Ay," said the widow, "be it war or love, the devil will be sure to have his hand in your mess, no matter whom you have at supper."

The widow did not admire her lodger certainly;—and had but little faith in his virtues, though she might respect his powers. Meanwhile, Inglehardt retired to his room, and lighting his pipe, sought, through this medium, to blow the clouds from off his brain. He is not one who suffers himself often to soliloquise; but he needs a safety-valve at this moment which the pipe itself will not supply, and he broods aloud, without heeding that we listen.

"I feel dubious about this whole affair. I feel that Travis is playing the rogue with me. I do not *know* it, I only *feel* it; it is an instinct; and I hate to rely upon instinct merely. I can not fathom the secret. I have those who watch him yet they report nothing unfavorable—all seems flowing smoothly, like a river going down to the sea, singing as it goes. Still, there is a something treacherous in the current, and I can not sound its depths.

"Yet what can be his game? He knows, as well as I do, that this rebellion is nearly burnt out. In the northern states, it scarcely shows a flame. Virginia and North Carolina have been swept by Arnold and Cornwallis. Georgia is crushed and helpless at the foot of Britain. Here, only, in our own province is the struggle maintained—and how? Greene is too cold and cautious to achieve any brilliant results. He only keeps alive by economizing his forces. The troops of Marion and Sumter, Pickens and the rest of the partisans—they come and go, and are equal only to small predatory performances. Half of the natives are in our ranks, and here are three new regiments from Ireland, and others coming. One disaster to Greene's army, and the war is ended.

“Well, I am in position, and Travis is in position. His policy is to be faithful to the crown and to me. He knows that I can tear him down at a moment—nay, give him to the halter. He has every motive of interest and safety to be faithful, and with such a man such notions are everything. We are both in a position to achieve fortune by the event, and that is as nearly reduced to certainty now, as anything can be in the world.

“And yet—I *feel* that he is treacherous! He does not press this matter with his daughter. He hopes yet to escape this necessity. But how? There is no doubt of my proofs, and he knows me too well to doubt that I will crush him, ay, hang him, without remorse, if he is unfaithful—though Bertha Travis lay at my feet pleading to me for mercy. He knows *that*, yet he trifles with me!

“Shall I submit to this trifling? Why has he not broached the matter to her in the last thirty-six hours, when I laid bare to him the absolute necessity of his case, and deliberately showed him my own stern resolve? He knows what I require, knows me firm, and knows his danger. Wherefore should he trifle, then, and procrastinate, unless in the hope of some method of evasion? Does he calculate on the chapter of accidents, in this three weeks which I have allowed him—calculate on chance shot or sabre stroke cutting me off and assuring his safety by silencing my testimony? Ha! I must let him understand that my very death is his ruin. I must give him to know that I shall so arrange the evidence against him, and place it in such keeping, that the very hour in which I perish gives up the secret to Balfour.

“And what are his sources of hope for these casualties? This Sinclair—where is he? His battalion is *not* with Greene. That is certain. Where is it? He, himself, has been heard of below, as far as Monck’s Corner, and Biggins’. A troop of cavalry supposed to be St. Julien’s, has been down upon the Pon Pon with Harden. This Edisto boy, Richard Coulter—my old school-mate too—is somewhere below, skirting and recruiting along the river. Can he be in any strength? I must prepare for some of these parties. My own recruits are strong enough now for a dash, and I must have them out scouting. Had I my

veterans here, something handsome might be done. I shall have them in another week—and then!

“But am I safe here another week? Hardly—if it be true that Harden, Maham, St. Julien, Sinclair, and Coulter, are below. It will need that I take to the swamp. Oh! for half-a-dozen scouts who know their business!

“This wooing is not my *forte*. It fatigues me. I require easy conquests with the sex. They do not compensate toil and stratagem. The father must do my wooing. I shall make it a short process with him, and he will find it needful to be quite as summary with her. He shall have his three weeks, but not a moment more. In that space of time, he can not escape me. Yet I must watch him. My instincts are ever sure, and, I feel, though I can not see, that he is treacherous. He has his game no doubt, but I will block it on him when he least expects it.”

We are not to suppose that all this soliloquy was delivered as we have written it, without pause, break, or interruption. The mood was almost dreamy in which the captain of loyalists uttered himself, with frequent intervals in which the pipe sent up its curling wavelets of smoke about his head, with his body thrown back, face lifted, and heels upon a chair opposite. And thrice, during his reverie, did he fill the bowl of the pipe with fresh tobacco. Meanwhile, his snuff-box lay untouched upon the table. He never took snuff except in the presence of others. Snuff-taking was one of his processes for pause—for gaining time—for masking a word or purpose.

In this soliloquy you have the secret of his moral make. Cold, calculating, selfish, remorseless, subtle as a serpent, and capable of using his fangs even where his passions are unexcited. He was too phlegmatic to woo. He thought too little of the sex, for such an effort. He could toil and weave laboriously in the effort to secure his enemies in his meshes, but he could not toil in behalf of his own heart. Power was his passion. He knew nothing of the fine, inspiring frenzies of love. Love he knew only in its coarser forms, as the creature of will and passion; and the coldness of his heart rendered him susceptible, even in this degree, only at periods, and when his brain craved a respite from political intrigues. We see what are his calculations touching the condition of the country, and

the prospects of the war. His politics were wanting as they chiefly contemplated the surface. Of men, in general, he knew much—could probe the ordinary character with skill and adroitness—but of superior men, having great impulse, without which there is no great virtue, he knew nothing. Enthusiasm was a thing of depth, beyond his plummet. Thus, it was that the very pressure which was calculated to bring out the real heroism in the country, was beheld by him only as a crushing and irresistible one—one to crush and be irresistible only among the class which he could comprehend—those who calculated the chances of the struggle, rather than the merits of it, and who gauged their patriotism by hopes and fears, rather than love, principle, and duty. In brief, this man, wonderfully shrewd and cunning, was master only of the avenues of the brain; of the deep, full heart, whether in man or woman—the absorbing generous affections, the glorious impulses, the honest gushings, and noble frenzies—he had no knowledge. For these he made no allowance.

But we need not linger in his analysis. He will develop himself as we proceed. Enough that, having finished his reverie and soliloquy, his pipe and plans, he prepared to join, and exercise his raw recruits. We need scarcely say that he gave them sufficient employment. He despatched sundry of his best men in different directions. He had silently matured the details of a progress, in which he was to act more decisively than ever upon Travis. But his necessities required that he should also send out his spies, to ascertain, if possible, what degree of risk he incurred in lingering about the village. The reports of scattered bands of the partisans *below* him, were calculated to render him uneasy. In fact, he felt that an enterprise against him, by a spirited and able captain, might have put him and his little troop entirely *hors de combat*. He had felt himself safe only in the supposed absence of the Americans with Greene and Marion, across the Santee. He had been so far safe, in fact, only as it was generally known by the partisans that he was temporarily invalided and in concealment, without any troops with him, and that they had their hands full elsewhere, of much better employment than looking after a game which promised so little of reward for the trouble of the search.

It was, indeed, only within the last ten days, and when he had succeeded in picking up some recruits, that he had ventured openly to show himself in Orangeburg. It was the report of Richard Coulter's troop in the neighborhood, that now, most of all, made him feel the necessity of a proper vigilance. Accordingly, his spies and scouts, such as they were, were all set in motion.

Leaving him to his plans and practices, let us see after Sinclair. We join him late in the day, when, having recrossed the river in Rowe's canoe, paddled over by the negro-boy, his horse swimming beside the boat as before, he sped up on the route toward Holly-Dale. He drew rein in the same neighborhood where he had held a previous interview with Travis. Here he stabled his horse in covert, and prepared to wait the reappearance of that person who, as he had learned, had gone down that morning to the village. We may state that Travis and Inglehardt again had a long private interview together, the result of which—both parties playing fox in the game—was to leave the latter in as great a degree of incertitude as ever—his instincts making him suspicious, his thought denying all reason for doubt or apprehension. Travis repeated his assurances of good faith—swearing at his leek, like Pistol, even while he swallowed it—and Inglehardt insinuating his warning of the penalties that would follow from his treachery.

"And while you are persuading your daughter, Travis, I must have the privilege of seeing her. My last three visits to your house, have been profitless in this respect. She keeps out of sight. Now she is indisposed, now she has retired for the night, and there is always some excuse. You must enlighten her upon the necessity of having no headache when I come, and particularly against going to bed so early."

Travis gave him a look full of hate and venom, but Inglehardt only laughed.

"By Heaven! Richard Inglehardt, I should sooner brain you than serve you."

"Ah! but that wouldn't serve *you*. Remember, as I have been at the pains to show you, the hour of my death is that of your arrest for treason, to say nothing of certain minor offences. The papers—proofs—I can reach at any moment, *so long*

as *I live*—dead, speechless, they are at once transferred to the keeping of Commandant Balfour. But, enough!”

And he handed his mull with nicely-extended finger to his auditor, throwing up the silver lid as he spoke.

“No, sir!” answered Travis, with stern look and emphasis—“no, sir! none of your snuff!”

The other only smiled as he helped himself. His thought was:—

“Yes, I have him in the toils, and he feels it. He has no means of evasion.”

In fact, Travis had played his cards so well, that Inglehardt’s instincts were shamed almost into silence by his mental convictions. They still lived, and were still somewhat watchful, but they were no longer urgent.

“Have you heard, Captain Inglehardt,” said Travis somewhat abruptly, “that Dick Coulter, with some ten or a dozen troopers, has been seen in the neighborhood of Cooper’s swamp?” thus giving very gratuitous information, and mutilating it besides—cutting down the twenty or thirty of Coulter to ten or a dozen. Inglehardt noticed this discrepancy between this account and his own, but the fact of Travis giving the information at all, was in proof of his playing fairly with him, and he could readily conceive that a discrepancy, in the report of numbers, might easily occur without being a fraudulent one. He did not know that Travis was already apprized of his own perfect knowledge of the whereabouts of Coulter; and he still pretended ignorance of the fact till the present moment.

“Ha! Coulter!” he exclaimed—“He about! At Cooper’s swamp, eh? But with a dozen men only! He must be seen to. We must take a *drive* in that quarter shortly, as soon as I get my ragamuffins in good order for a charge.”

What more was spoken between them, we need not here report. It was of business matters, affecting their own relations, and those of the army; but as Travis was about to leave the loyalist captain, the other touched him gently on the arm, and looking with his deep, keen eyes, a stare of sharp and unyielding firmness, he said:—

“Remember, Captain Travis, I am serious in the demand to

see your daughter when I happen to visit Holly-Dale. She must not keep out of my sight. She must not show aversion. There must be no petty excuses of headache and early coughing. I must not only have your assurance that you will fulfil your engagement, but I must exercise my own eyes, in seeing what sort of progress you make. It must not be a thing of mere coercion;—she must be won—her affections—”

“And how the d—l am I to reach them in your behalf, when, perhaps, she has no affection for you?”

“Ask the devil, and he may instruct you in the process. At all events, I require to watch the progress. To-morrow, if you say so—to-morrow, I will visit Holly-Dale.”

It was with indiscreet quickness that Travis answered:—

“Not to-morrow! not so soon! It will take me some days to prepare her mind.”

“Ah! her antipathies are very strong, I see! But you will advise me when she relents, when she relaxes, when she begins to love—will you?”

“You are a sneering devil, Inglehardt.”

“And you anything but a smiling one, Travis,” was the quiet reply, “though devil you are, by all that’s satanical. The only wonder is how you should ever have been blessed with so saintly a daughter.”

Travis felt it in his heart to knock him down, and looked it; but the other, his eyes still on him, fed his nose from the snuff-box, with his complacency totally unmoved. That prudence which taught Travis to *seem* very angry with his subtle associate, taught him to subdue within proper limits his genuine anger. They separated, with a burst of bad temper from Travis, and a cool, contemptuous grin and bow from Inglehardt.

CHAPTER XXX.

HOW LOVERS MAY FORGET THEMSELVES.

"Oh! verily, a pleasant confidence!—
So sure in love that nothing can be lost,
Though very much at stake. If their souls keep
This music to the last, 'twill end in heaven:
'Tis Truth here, happy in its innocence."— *Old Play.*

THE cool, sarcastic, contemptuous tyranny of Inglehardt, was momentarily strengthening the resolution of resistance and rebellion in the heart of Travis; and preparing him to second the desires—whatever they might be—of Willie Sinclair and his associates.

"Curse him to his marrow!" he muttered as he left the village. "He shall pay for all this insolence before I'm done with him. Let this arrangement but ripen—let me but blind him for the present, and I shall have my revenge out of him."

He rode briskly until he had nearly reached the spot where he expected to meet Willie Sinclair, when he subdued his paces, and was, after a little while, joined by the person he expected. Then he dismounted and led his horse into the woods.

"Well, major," said he impatiently—"have you heard? Is all right? Shall I have the meeting?"

"Yes: to-morrow, at three in the afternoon, at Holly-Dale. Abram will bring him across in the dug-out."

"You will be present."

"Not at your conference, of course, which I suppose you desire should be private; but I will be in the neighborhood. I must keep good watch to see that he suffers no harm."

"You do not doubt my good faith, major. By Heaven, sir, you will find me true. My feelings and policy go together here."

"I trust so; I believe you: but you can only assure me of yourself. I must make sure against all others. This man Inglehardt has increased his troop. He may be suspicious. He could be troublesome."

"He has no suspicion of you—none of our project—he may have of me. But I flatter myself I have shut up his eyes, or diverted them to another quarter. I have told him that Coulter is in the river swamp below, and this offers him a new subject for anxiety."

"But why tell him that?"

"It can do no harm to Coulter, and I told Inglehardt just enough of the truth to lead him into a snare. Instead of twenty-five troopers which is the least force of Coulter, I said he had only ten or a dozen; and instead of Chevillette's and Barton's, I represented him as harboring considerably beyond."

"I suspect he knows better. He has his own scouts below. There were two of them scouting down the Charleston road to-day."

"He has no scouts worth a copper."

"Still, it is something of an error with politicians to refine too much. I hope you did not intrude your intelligence urgently. He had probably heard of Coulter from other quarters."

"So I thought; and hence my information. That it was already known to him, was not a fact to be known to me. That I told him what I did know, and what he would be likely to suppose that I knew, was calculated to do away with all doubt that I was dealing honestly with him. No harm can come of it, I think."

"Perhaps not—I hope not! Still, I would stake nothing unnecessarily, nothing for which the game does not absolutely call. But I must leave you. All is sufficiently understood between us. You will look for us at three to-morrow."

We need not report more of their dialogue. The parties separated; Sinclair riding below, in the direction of Orangeburg; Travis speeding homeward at a smart canter.

The conference had taken place in the thicket just below the "Four-mile Branch," a place that seemed to promise perfect secrecy. Everything was quiet when they reached the spot,

which might have been a hundred yards distant from the road. On one side of them ran the branch. Between them and the road spread a thick bay, on the edge of which, seated on a log, and holding the bridle of their horses, they communed together. Here not a murmur was to be heard saving their own voices. The air was hushed. The bay was the abiding place only of the reptile and the wild cat. We have heard what was said between them, of interest to this progress. Unfortunately, amid all this silence and seeming security, it was heard by other ears. Scarcely had they ridden out of sight when a wild and savage-looking being, huge of limb, brutal of aspect, in ragged garments, but armed with pistols and knife, started out of the bushes, not ten steps from the spot where they had been seated. He had heard every syllable. It had been easy for him to have shot them both down with a single bullet; but this was by no means his policy. Their secret was of much more importance to his interests than their lives. Then, too, there was some peril in any more demonstrative course. Had his pistol missed fire, his own fate was certain.

The savage being thus emerging from the thicket, was no less a personage than "Hell-fire Dick"—a cognomen which he had learned to prize as of more value, and more distinction than the innocent name of Joel Andrews received from his parents.

"Ho! ho! ho! hain't I got you now, Cappin Travis. Won't it be nuts for Dick Inglehardt, what I has to tell him. And you, too, Willie Sinclair!—I reckon I has you, too, under the saddle! I reckon I'll hev' a ride on both o' your necks by three o'clock to-morrow. Well! if this news don't set me all right with Cappin Inglehardt, for the matter of that desartion, and git me some good gould guineas besides, I'm never no more to be in the way of good luck, and I may as well give up trying.

"Now, who'd a thought I'd ha' cotched Willie Sinclair hyar, when he's throw'd me off his trail everywhar else? Jest when I was a sleeping too. Well, it's a sign that I'm to hev' a chaine of good fortin again; and I'll be at her like a man that knows she's worth a tussle.

"And how shill it be?"

And he mused awhile, sitting upon the same tree which Sinclair and Travis had so lately occupied.

"It's no use to let Rafe Brunson know about this diskivery. Dick Inglehardt never pays too freely, and the diskivery is all my own. Why should I give the 'Trailer' any of my own hard airnings? And whar's he jist now, even ef I was to look a'ter him. May be some five miles off, and whar? Ef I goes about making signals in these woods, who knows but I may start up a dozen of Sinclair's scouts. Tain't reasonable for me to do that. I could have shot him and Travis both—always supposing that the we'pon didn't miss fire, but there mought be a dozen troopers closing in upon me from the road. Oh! ef I could find out where Sinclair has hid away that hundred guineas that he tuk from Pete Blodgit. In course, he aint a-riding about with it now. That chainece is done and gone, clear. And what's the chainece now? Why to catch them two conspirating rebels in the same net. That's the how; and the way to do it is to see Cappin Inglehardt.

"But what if he axes me about that desartion, and is wanting to be hard upon me. I must make tarms with him first. Yes, that's the way with him. He'd be mighty smooth with me till he'd sucked out my secrets, and then he'd put on a grand look, and talk of example, and how decent and proper 'twas to hang a man for desarting, jist to encourage other desarters. I must hev' tarms with our ily tongue cappin.

"Ha! and thar's that matter about Coulter. So he's about agin—and I suppose harboring in 'Bear Castle.' He ought to build and settle thar, now that they call him the hero of 'Bear Castle.' He kin fight and he will, and ef he's got thirty men with him, I reckon he's a-preparing now to make a dash at Inglehardt. And our cappin wants all the men he kin git. He'll be glad enough to hev' me and the Trailer back agin in his ranks. He knows what I am for an orderly, and he knows what the Trailer is for a scout. We air as good as any other six fellows he could pick up, and stout fellows air a git-ting scarce in these parts. I see my way pretty cl'ar now."

Suffice it that our Dick of Tophet deliberately arranged all the argument, with which to win his way back to the favor of Captain Inglehardt, before rising from his seat. When he had

fully conned his part he got up, moved to the opposite side of the *bay* and brought out the little hackney of a horse, of which he had dispossessed Blodgit so unscrupulously. He mounted, and took his way down for Orangeburg, avoiding the public road as much as possible, and proceeding so slowly as to have the cloak of night about him before penetrating the village.

Sinclair, meanwhile, never once apprehending this new danger, sped downward, also, until he reached the forks of the road near Pen Branch, when he turned to the right, and sped in a northwest direction for a mile. Here he turned into the woods, found a hollow tree, which delivered him a letter, possessed himself of its contents, and having destroyed it, wheeled about, and returned upon his own steps till he gained the point where he had been accustomed to ford the river. By this time it was dark, and objects were discerned indistinctly. He, however, rode on through the woods, which he thoroughly knew, at a trot, and was just descending the hill-slope to the swamp, when a pistol bullet whistled by his ears, the dull report, without echoes, following a moment after.

His blood was roused. To dash into the thicket, on his right, whence the shot issued, was his first instinct, but he felt, the next moment, how absurd would be any attempt to discover the assassin in such a thicket, and amidst the increasing darkness. He gave but a single frowning glance at the dense harborage, and congratulating himself upon his escape, he sped forward with as much haste as the forest would permit, and was soon beyond the reach of any similar salutation from the same hands.

"Missed him, by jingo!" quoth the Trailer, rising from his perch some twenty steps from the spot where Sinclair had passed.

"Dern the puppies! I don't believe in pistols no how. But I thought I had him dead. I never was good at no kind of shooting we'pon, and I don't think it's the business of a trailer to fight. He's only got to trail, and scent, and scout. Now if Hell-fire Dick had been hyar, we'd ha' fixed him. But we've got his track agin, and that's something. I wander ef he's got them guineas in his pouch yit?"

Our major bore a charmed life. He crossed the river in safety, and was soon in the camp with Abram.

"No tidings yet of Ballou, 'Bram?"

"Nebber yar not'ing 'bout 'em, maussa. I feard, ef he ain't drunk someway in de woods, dem tory ob Ingl'art got em."

Sinclair mused.

"'Bram!" said he, "there are enemies on our track. I have just escaped a pistol-shot."

"De Lawd be praise! Whay, maussa?"

Sinclair described the spot. 'Bram knew instantly what was to be done, and girded himself up accordingly for the trail. "Fight fire with fire," is the forest maxim. Let the scout track the scout. Though not equal to Ballou, not equal to "the Trailer," 'Bram had a good nose, was untiring, sagacious, vigilant, quick to follow, and keen to find.

"I mus' look a'ter dis pistol-pusson," said he quietly.

"Yes, 'Bram, that is what you are now to do; but the course for you is down to Holly-Dale. You must cross with me. I shall be about the bluff till midnight, and if you can get up to me by that hour, we shall recross together. We have got too much work to-morrow not to need all the sleep we can get to-night, and my eyes are even now drawing straws."

The canoe was put out with the two in it, passed rapidly over to the other side, and fastened out of sight among the swamp willows at the foot of the bluff. Sinclair gave full directions to the negro, and the stout and faithful fellow had soon buried himself in the thickets below Holly-Dale, and was working his way downward, sly as a fox, stealthy as a serpent, and keen-eyed as a lynx. He had some two miles to go before he could reach the spot where Sinclair had escaped his peril. We need not follow him. His master had ascended the bluff meanwhile, and stolen off to a little grove of cedars, where he was wont to meet with Bertha Travis and her brother. Here he laid himself down to wait. He looked up through the green foliage, at the stars, out upon the river, gliding downward with a pleasant murmur, softly bright, darkly clear, and with a wing of cooling speeding over its surface from the east. That breeze was full of the inspiring sense of life. He threw his bosom wide to its penetrating freshness. His day had been one of toil, beneath a sky that seemed all one sun. He had scarcely rested from motion one hour in the twelve; and the present respite,

in that cool breeze, was something more than relief. It won him from musing into dreaming, in which all the images were delicious.

After a while two figures emerged from the grove, and came out upon the bluff. They were Bertha and Henry Travis.

"He is not here," said the boy.

"He is among the cedars," answered the girl, and they turned to the left, and moved down the slope leading to the swamp, where the cedars grew most thickly, the boy leading the way, the girl following slowly. In a few moments he hurried to her and said in a whisper :—

"Oh ! Bertha, would you believe it, he is asleep under the cedars, sound asleep ! Who would believe it. I thought a trooper never slept."

And he laughed merrily at his own notion. The girl hesitated for a moment. But why ? Ask that inscrutable little deity who occupies so gladly the vacant places in a virgin's heart, to unfold to you the mystery of his rule, and the caprice which marks his impulse. There was some little strange conceit of maidenhood which made Bertha Travis reluctant to look upon her lover sleeping. It was a new situation in which to see him.

But Henry pulled her forward.

"Only think, a great dragoon officer asleep on his post."

"He must be very tired, Henry. Besides, he is not now on duty."

"Indeed !" said the boy pertly—"but you know nothing about it. He told me himself that he was never on severer duty than now."

"And it has exhausted him."

"We must wake him up."

"No ! Let him sleep. He must be very much tired to sink down and sleep here."

The girl might well say that. Sinclair had never dreamed that he should be so surprised by the velvet-footed god, on the very threshold of his sweetheart's dwelling, and when he came especially to see her.

"But suppose he should be surprised, Bertha, by some of these scouts ? Who knows ? They're all about."

"We'll watch for him, Henry," said the girl. "He must be very tired to fall asleep here."

Surely, Bertha, no conclusion could be more logical.

"Very well ! I'll keep sentry along that wood. You watch here, Bertha, and when I give the alarm, and fire off my piece, do you prepare to rouse him and run. Take right down the slope for the swamp ; you'll find the dug-out down among the willows, and push right out into the stream."

The boy was anxious to feel his responsibilities, and to prove that he was equal to them. The damsel laughed.

"Where's your piece, Henry ?"

"Oh ! never mind. I only used the military phrase. When I give tongue and shout, you may know that the enemy is upon us."

And the boy marched away full of dignity, and took post along the edge of the wood. Bertha walked around her lover, looked down upon him, stole nearer, looked out to see if Henry's eyes could watch her as well as the wood, and, seemingly satisfied of the impossibility of his doing the feat, she suffered herself to sink down near the head of our sleeping dragoon.

Sinclair slept profoundly, breathing easily and gently, as if no load lay upon his chest or conscience. Bertha watched the noble ingenuous face as it lay revealed beneath the starlight, and she thought—ah ! that is beyond us—we really know not what she thought. But unquestionably thought was busy in her little brain, and feeling in her heart. The picture made her think. The feminine mind thinks through pictures, precisely as does that of genius ; hence the delicacy of genius—its exquisite sensibilities which can appreciate the most delicate sympathies in humanity. It is because of the *feminine* element, which distinguishes the true genius always. It is the soul informing the sensuous.

We have no right to pry into Bertha's thoughts, but we may watch her conduct. She gazed, for long, upon the face of the sleeper, seeming never weary of the gaze ; after awhile her hands lifted his hair—he had made a pillow of his cap—and drew out the long masses, which had grown in the busy excitements of war, which left no time for the toilet, almost as long as those of Absalom or Samson ; and, playing with his hair, and

looking in his face—Bertha finally—slept also!—her head being quietly suffered to rest beside her lover's—while one of her arms—of course without her consciousness—stretched over and rested upon his bosom. Was ever such a situation!

Let us leave them for a space—leave Henry Travis diligently playing sentinel, and look after the scouting negro 'Bram.

He was not successful. "The Trailer," after the escape of Sinclair, had contented himself with marking the trail, and then changed his ground. As a good scout, he knew too well the danger of lingering too long in the old form. He had mounted and made off within a quarter of an hour after.

But 'Bram *snaked* the precinct for a couple of tedious hours. He had just resolved to give up the search, and return to his master, when, stretching out his body, for relief from the contracted position, he felt a heavy hand laid upon his shoulder from behind. The heart of the negro was in his mouth in an instant. He knew that the enemy, if such he were, had him at great advantage, and with a grunt, he muttered in low tones:—

"Who dat?"

He was relieved by a good-humored but subdued laugh, in the well-known voice of Jim Ballou.

"And I say, nigger, is that the way you do your scouting, grunting as you go—as you go—just like a lazy hog in scarce acorn time? I know'd you by the grunt, twenty yards off. I did—twenty yards off."

"Ha! I so glad. I bin 'feard, Ballou, when you put you' paw 'pon my shoulder, 'twa some ob dem d—m' Ingl'art tory. I so glad 'tis you. And whay de debble you bin all dis time?"

"That's what we may talk about, old fellow, when we get to camp—get to camp! Where's the major now?"

"I leff him on de Bluff at Holly-Dale."

"Well, let's go there—go!"

And thither they went.

Our young self-appointed sentinel, Henry Travis, was at his post, pacing to and fro along the edge of the wood, satisfied that he was doing great things, and doing them excellently well. His imagination was picturing to his eyes, a future career in arms, in which he was to become the observed of all observers. He was achieving brilliant enterprises; passing

rapidly through all grades of promotion; he was already a colonel of cavalry, and calculating a quick passage over the interval separating him still from the command of a brigade. That was certain, however. Oh! the dream of youth! how pleasantly it persuades the hope over that dreary Zahara, which teaches us the sternness of truth, in its naked simplicity, at such perilous cost—that experience which young men too little value, and old men are apt to value too much!

Just then, the boy was made a prisoner—clasped tenaciously in a pair of rough arms, against which his struggles were of as much avail as those of a butterfly in the vice of a blacksmith.

What an empire of dream was upset in a moment. The colonel was a prisoner—the hope of the brigadiership was gone—gone—gone! So complete was the surprise that the poor sentinel totally forgot to discharge his piece—that is, forgot that he had need to shout his loudest, to apprize the sleeping dragoon of his enemy. Before he quite recovered himself to halloo—he kicked and struggled lustily, however, in silence—the merry chuckle of 'Bram relieved him, and he was released. His captor was Jim Ballou, who said to him:—

“It takes a good deal, Master Henry, to make a sodger; and to be a good sentinel a man ought to be a good sodger. It's mighty hard to keep down thinking when a man's a watching, and yet to be thinking at such a time is apt to turn out mighty poor watching—poor watching. You see how easy it was to captivate you.”

“But how could you come up and I not hear you, Mr. Ballou?”

“That's an art in scouting, Master Henry, and if Jim Ballou is good for anything it is scouting. I'm a sort of born scout—a born scout—it comes from natur, mostly, though one has a great deal to larn to make natur perfect—perfect. But where's the major?”

“He's sleeping yonder down among the cedars. He was so tired. We found him asleep, and sister said she'd watch by him, and I was to watch the wood, and I did think I was watching closely, and to be so caught!”

The boy was mortified. It was, indeed, something of a fall from the brilliant progress to a colonelcy, with a brigadiership in the vista, into sudden and unexpected captivity.

"Never you mind, Master Henry," said the scout consoling him. "No man can be made a sodger in a day, or a year. It's a business for a good long life. It's easier a great deal for a young man to fight than to watch. You must keep his blood on a boil if you want good work out of him. On a boil, I say. If you don't—if you let the fire burn down, he'll be looking out for the stars, and walk into the pit—into the pit. Five years sodgering is needful to make a fellow even a good sentinel, and it takes more than that a great deal to make a scout. You'll do better on a charge than on a post, Master Henry, and you needn't get vexed with yourself, or feel ashamed that you ain't a perfect sodger at the beginning of the war. I ain't afeard that you won't make a good one in time—good in time. You'll do! you will! But let's look up the major now. He's got to open his eyes—yes, open his eyes, now."

The three walked together across the bluff toward the cedars, and Sinclair and Bertha still lay sleeping side by side, her slender arm across his herculean breast.

"Why, they're *both* asleep!" cried Henry.

"Yes, who'd believe it!" responded Ballou. "It's a pictur' of the babies in the wood—babies in the wood."

"How dat, Jim Ballou!" quoth 'Bram, indignant. "You call big man like dat baby?"

"Man or baby, he must up and be a-doing. Hello, major! Hello! and heave up!"

With a fling that shook the arm of Bertha from his bosom, Sinclair leaped to his feet, and drew his pistols.

"Friends, major," said Ballou, "friends."

"How! what's this, Ballou?" Then seeing Bertha, now starting up and rising, bewildered rather than ashamed at her situation. "Ha! you too, Bertha?" And he clasped her in his arms.

"When did you come?"

She could tell him nothing. They had both slept three hours at least, and merrily did Henry Travis laugh, and pleasant were the mutual chucklings of Ballou and 'Bram, as they thought of the discovery.

Poor Bertha knew not what to say. Of course she tried to explain and to understand. She had watched, she knew not

how long, and still he slept. And everything was so quiet, and Henry was on the watch—and—and—

"Say no more, dear heart," said Sinclair, taking her long tresses into his hands—they had escaped the comb while she slept—"Say no more! I am only vexed with myself that I should sleep like a dullard, without once dreaming what a dear companion was at my side. And what news, Ballou? Where have you harbored so long?"

I reckon, major, you begun to think I had fallen back upon the Jamaica."

"I confess, Ballou, such were my fears!"

"I know'd it! I know'd it! But you were wrong. Hadn't I made an eternal oath, and didn't I call upon the Lord himself to be a witness? When I break that oath, major, I'm a lost sinner! No! I hain't had a drop to drink, and not always a mouthful to eat. I've had hard work, and was so bewildered between the two rapsallions, Devil Dick and the Trailer, that I couldn't get to you. I wished a thousand times that I could split myself into three—into three—split myself into three parts—and each of them a good Jim Ballou scout—that I might do the thing clean. 'Twas work, sir—*work!* And we've all got to work, sir. There's trouble in the wind, sir—in the wind."

And the party seated themselves while Jim Ballou told the story of his progress from the moment of his start, on the trail of the two outlaws. We shall have to abridge this narrative to *our* limits, though Sinclair found it an interesting one, as did Bertha and Henry Travis.

CHAPTER XXXI.

DOUBT, ANXIETY, PREPARATION.

“Now this traverse,
Will he as promptly take and well pursue,
As if the zig-zag of the perilous road,
Were fashioned in his brain;—each trick and turn,
Having no finger pointer on the route,
As legible as if written down by card.”—*The Strategist.*

“You had the start of them twelve hours, major. They tracked you to Turkey hill. They lost you there.”

“How do you know that, Ballou?”

“I tracked them, and found where they were at fault. I know how they missed you. They followed your trail to the stable, and supposed they followed it back to the house when you set out again. But you did not go back to the house, though that was the common way, when you went off. Your horse wasn't brought up to the house at all. You went to the stable, and there mounted. I found your moccasin track in the sand by the post of the gate. When you left the stable you went out of the back door, there you mounted, and went right down into the creek; you kept the creek up for twenty yards, when you went out upon the banks, and there took the Granby road down for a while, when you struck into Cawcaw swamp, and kept the edge of it till you were within a mile of the village; there you fastened your horse to a hickory, on the edge of a *bay* that was a sink hole—and pushed out straight for the village. I reckon from the footmarks of the horse, stamping where you hitched him, that you had him there half the night. You brought him out twenty large ears of corn—no *nubbins*—and three bundles of fodder. You brought it yourself; for there were no foot-tracks but your own. When you mounted again,

which I reckon you did just about daylight, you took the road on the outside of the village till you struck in for the bridge; there you crossed, pushed up the river road for a bit, then went into cover, and hitched your nag again, and kept him some hours hitched, when you pushed forward again, and made through the woods till you got to the bluff at Holly-Dale. Before I had done tracking you to the village, 'Bram caught up with me, and when we had tracked you to Holly-Dale, we crossed the river at the ford below, and I planted 'Bram in the camp opposite the Holly-Dale landing, where he was to signal you."

"So far right—all as you say, Ballou! But what made you separate from 'Bram?"

"I didn't think he was of much account in helping me—"

"Wha' dat! Ha! 'Bram nobody, I 'spose?"

"Yes, you're good enough, 'Bram, and could ha' helped me, as I found afterward, but I didn't think it then. The business then before me was to find the trail of Devil Dick and Brunson. That was the true business, and it has kept me mighty busy I can tell you—mighty busy ever since I left your trail. For you see Dick and Brunson divided, and I could never get on the spot where they did divide, and they worried me from side to side, with the crossing of their trails, and I did not dare to leave 'em to bring up 'Bram for fear I should lose 'em both. But I soon found that when they had lost you at Turkey hill, they guessed it boldly that you'd make for Holly-Dale, and here they come, almost in a bee-line."

"Ah!—well!"

"They've been on your track more than once, but I don't think they found out our ford until to-day, even if they've found it out at all, and what with your constant changes, and the use of the dug-out both here and at Captain Rowe's, they've been kept mighty busy to get and keep on the track. Well, as I was to watch after them that were a-watching after you, I had nothing to do but to keep their trails warm, and that's been work enough. To-day, Devil Dick laid eyes on you, I reckon, for the first time. He must have seen you go into the wood with Captain Travis. He was hid—that is, his horse—which is Pete Blodgit's by rights—was hid on the opposite side of the bay where you and the captain sat and talked. I reckon

he was not more than three hundred yards of you all the time, but I couldn't find his trail anywhere from his horse's."

"He couldn't have heard our speech."

"I don't know, but I reckon not. The bay was thick and wide, more than a hundred yards across, and, as I tell you his nag was fastened in the woods t'other side. If he had been watching near enough to *hear* you, he would have been quite near enough to shoot you both, and I reckon there was no good reason why he shouldn't do it, if he could. He passed me going down—I suppose after you had gone up—about fifty yards off, and was then going it, in a smart canter, toward the village. If I had been mounted, I could have overhauled him as he rode, but my horse was hidden half-a-mile off, and I was snaking it toward the bay, where I know'd you had gone in. As for 'the Trailer,' I lost his track yesterday, and couldn't stop to hunt it up, being so keen after Devil Dick's, though from what 'Bram tells me, and what I know myself, it must have been him who shot at you this afternoon. 'Bram says 'twas a pistol-bullet, and Brunson and Devil Dick, both have pistols and nothing else, except perhaps a knife; and there's been no hostile person, that I could find, upon any of the tracks here-about in the last three days. Of course that's always excepting the visit of Captain Inglehardt and four of his mounted men to Holly-Dale; but they took openly up the main road."

Sinclair listened to this narrative with close attention, interrupting it only when he desired fuller details in regard to particular facts. Ballou resumed, and closed thus:—

"I pushed after Devil Dick, till I made sure that he had crossed the bridge, and had gone into the village. Then I turned about and pushed up where I thought I should find you. But I thought it best to snake awhile on the old trail of Brunson, for I was jubous he was going to give us trouble; and so it was that I happened to come upon 'Bram, who was crawling over a log, and forgetting himself, and giving a grunt like an old hog every now and then; as if a good scout wasn't always a silent dog."

"I hu't [hurt] myse'f on de log, das wha' mek me grunt; and ef you bin hu't youse'f like me, Mass Ballou, I reckon you lay up t'ree day wid grunts and 'fictions."

Ballou didn't notice this resentful speech. He resumed:—

"It's for you, major, to say what's to be done. There's no saying what Devil Dick's gone to Orangeburg for. But he's after mischief. He's a deserter from Inglehardt's own rangers, and so's Brunson, but they'll join again, if Inglehardt'll let them. My idee is that he's gone to make terms with his old captain, and that he expects to catch you here at Holly-Dale. So, look out—that's all—be on the look out."

"Bertha, I must see your father. You and Henry must now return to the house. But you will scarce need any more sleep to-night, eh?"

This was said archly, and he walked on with the damsel, in the direction of the dwelling, and their parting words were inaudible to other ears.

"Henry," said he to the boy—"are you willing to do duty?"

"Anything, Major Willie, for you."

"Do you know the place called 'Bull-fight Pond'?"

"Yes, every cypress round it."

"Can you get a horse by sunrise to-morrow and canter off there, letting nobody know but Bertha?"

"Yes, I can do it, if I let nobody know. But if father or mother guessed it, they'd never suffer it. They're for keeping me a boy always."

"Take this ring, ride thither as soon as you can in the morning; you will probably find the troops of St. Julien there. Give him that ring, by which he will know that you come from me, and tell him that he must use his spurs. Let him come off with you, and see that he hides away in the wood on the opposite side of the road just fronting your upper avenue. He will know my signal, and when he arrives here and puts himself in cover, tell him to hang out his as agreed on."

The brother and sister moved quickly to the house. Sinclair lurked about the edges of the thin wood which lay between him and the river. The two scouts kept watch on the thickets below. Soon, Captain Travis joined our major of dragoons, and received in brief sentences, the report made by Ballou.

It staggered him.

"This is unfortunate. It will precipitate events. I expected to break with him, and was preparing to defy him. To-morrow's interview will probably enable me to do that. But—"

The other interrupted him.

"Of that interview he can know nothing. I have no reason to suppose that this spy has arrived at anything more than the fact that we have been together, and that I am harbored at Holly-Dale. He has only reached me, by suspecting that I would be here."

"And Inglehardt will seek you here? He hates you, and would destroy you without remorse."

"I know it—but fear nothing for myself. I shall be prepared for Inglehardt and will gladly welcome the struggle with him. But there is *one* whom I am loath to peril here, with the chances of a conflict before me, the results of which are doubtful. Why not defer this interview?"

"To me it would probably be fatal! To save myself I shall have to fly—whither? To the doubtful securities of the American party. No! not unless I had the *one* guaranty from the only hand that can give it. I must have his pledge. I will trust no other."

"But can you not put yourself in hiding until the opportunity for the meeting is afforded you?"

"That would be fatal to my fortunes. It would be equivalent to a full confession of all that might be charged against me, and would lead to the confiscation of all my effects."

"Your negroes might *be run* this very night. 'Bram will take charge of them to and across the Santee."

"I will not risk that. I know that Rawdon with his twelve hundred men are approaching from the Congaree. I know that Stewart, with a like force and convoy, is pressing up from below, to a junction with Rawdon. Between these armies the risk would be immense, since they necessarily preclude the possibility of any American parties between."

"Not so conclusive. Greene is in full pursuit of Rawdon, and his forces consist mostly of mounted infantry. Sumter, Washington, Marion, and Lee, working apart at this moment, are under orders for co-operation. They will unite and force Rawdon to an engagement, with the odds all on our side. But do you know that Cruger is pressing down from Ninety-Six with a force of twelve hundred also, the garrison at that place, and all the loyalists of the region, the men all mounted, and

ordered to take this very route between the forks of Edisto? Judge what are the chances of safety for your negroes, if Cruger finds them here, and learns from Inglehardt that you have abandoned the royal cause."

Travis clasped his head between his hands.

"On every side I see the danger. But Cruger is not here yet, and can not well be here under three days; and I will not—I dare not—trust the Americans with my property, until I have the guaranty of that *one* signature which alone can insure me safety. If it comes to the worst, Major Sinclair, I can always buy off Inglehardt."

"With the hand of your daughter?" said the other indignantly.

"Ay, sir! and a child, for whom a father has toiled all his life, may well make a sacrifice in his behalf, which will insure her all that he has toiled for."

Sinclair strode the ground to and fro, with impatience, anxiety, and a feverish vexation, which he could scarcely suppress from speech.

"Captain Travis," he said, "is it possible that you do not see what you require me to put in peril—the very destinies of the state?"

"I can not help it, sir! I must have the required securities. None other will avail me. But I do not think that Inglehardt will attempt anything so soon. He knows not what we know. He only knows that you have been with me—that you are lurking about—and that I am dealing with you, and so against himself."

"And will not this precipitate his action?"

"Not till he is stronger. His force is small, and he will apprehend from Coulter."

"Captain Travis, I pledge you my life that you will receive the required indemnity without needing *his* presence here. I will guaranty it. Say the word, and I despatch Ballou to keep him from coming here. I will remain, and do what I can toward receiving Inglehardt in a proper manner."

But Travis had become dogged in degree with his own apprehensions.

"I must have the signature—the certificate—and then I

care not how soon the issue comes. I shall then be ready for any event. But I know too well the tender mercies of the whigs to the loyalists to trust them without written security, which shall acknowledge my services, now, while the war lasts, and after it, when the reign of peace shall witness the resentments of society against the victims of war. I must insist upon the arrangement or nothing."

"Be it so. I shall submit the facts to himself, though I ride all night. He shall determine for himself."

"Remember, Major Sinclair, how many necks of Charleston citizens lie in my keeping!"

"Do not threaten, Captain Travis, I implore you!" was the answer, in tones full of disgust.

"I can't help it, sir. Tell him all."

"Enough; I will tell him all that it is proper he should know. But, I would have you, as the father of Bertha Travis, forbear a language which would give her pain, and can not do you honor."

"Oh! sir, I have survived the romantic notions of youth."

"Honor and magnanimity are, I trust, not less the virtues of age. Can it be, sir, that, under any circumstances, you would give up to British vengeance, the people of whom you speak?"

"I must make them, if need be, the price of my own security."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Sinclair, striding away. He returned a moment after.

"Sir—Mr. Travis—I will communicate with my principal to-night. He shall know the risk which he is required to encounter, and if he determine to meet you, I will do all that I can to see that he does not suffer. If you will not trust me, *he* may trust you; and I—I will put my trust, under God, in myself, and my own resources. Enough then—I must hasten from you. One word before we part. You have those fatal papers in safety?"

"I have!"

"Let me give you a friend's counsel. If there be any of your papers in the village likely to give you trouble, gallop down there to-night, with all the secrecy you can, and get them in your possession."

"I am safe in that quarter."

"So much the better. I leave you. If you do not hear from me by midday to-morrow, take for granted that we withdraw from the meeting. It is one which I dare not counsel *now*."

The next moment, Sinclair had left the place, and, accompanied by Ballou and Abram, was recrossing the river to his camp. There, he gave commissions to both, which were to be executed before morning, and while he himself prepared to leave the swamp for a rapid ride toward the northeast, Ballou set off for the ford with instructions to seek for Coulter; 'Bram, on the other hand, sped away in the opposite direction.

"If there is to be treachery and danger," said our major of dragoons to him, "they shall not find me unprepared."

At twelve o'clock, the next day, Travis received a slip, containing these words:—

"Let him of H. D. know that I see no reason to depart from our arrangement as originally made. J. R."

It was enough. Travis destroyed the paper as soon as he had read it. He had heard nothing of Inglehardt. The day was calm and bright. He did not believe that he had anything to fear. Inglehardt was not likely to hurry himself. He did not relish open demonstrations. He preferred a secret policy, and this always requires time.

Where, meanwhile, was Sinclair?—where Ballou and 'Bram? Young Henry Travis, too, has gone, unsuspected upon his mission—brave, ambitious boy—speeding at a smart canter in search of the troop of St. Julien. All are at work; all busy to one end, the issue of which is yet deeply hidden beneath the cloudy veil which ever hides the coming dawn. They are all busy, and with cheerful hearts and hopeful spirits. But the adverse stars are working. Their enemies are busy also; as how should it be otherwise?—the natural antagonism of evil, being the true motive-power for the exercise of good! Oh! what an absurdity were Virtue, if Vice stood not confronting her, with black aspect, and serpent cunning, and horrent spear!

CHAPTER XXXII.

DICK OF TOPHET ON THE CARPET.

“Command our present members
Be mustered; bid the captain look to ’t. Now, sir,
What have you dreamed of late of this war’s purpose?”——
“We’ll slip you for a season!”—*Cymbeline*.

It was night when Hell-fire Dick found himself in Orangeburg, and at the entrance of the widow Bruce’s dwelling.

Captain Inglehardt had been busy all the day with his raw recruits, preparing for a recommencement of the duties of the field, and especially seeking to have them in readiness for the prospective encounter with the troop of Coulter. His scouts were still on the hunt below, along the swamps of Edisto. Inglehardt sat in his chamber seeking solace in his pipe, when the door opened, and Dick of Tophet stood before him—wild of aspect, shaggy haired, with ragged raiment, the grim picture of the ruffian and outlaw that he was.

It was some moments before the captain of loyalists recognised his visiter. When he did, he said:—

“What! You! Are you not afraid to show yourself here, Dick? Don’t you know that your life is forfeited? What should keep you from the gallows, fellow, if I should call in a few of my troopers?”

“They’re not in calling distance, cappin. I took care of that afore I come here. I know jest where they keep, and know that ef ’twas in me to do sich a thing, I could slash you to pieces afore you could sing a psalm. No! no! I felt my way all along as I come, and I made sure thar was no risk. I am too old a sodger to trust any offiser in the army with my life.”

The coolness of the ruffian might have alarmed a more timid

and less-prepared person than Richard Inglehardt. He simply cast his eyes upon the pistols that lay before him, convenient to his grasp, to say nothing of the rapier which had just been unbuckled from his side, and leaned against the panel of the fireplace. To grasp either would have been easy. But Inglehardt knew his man, and well conceived that he never would have shown himself but that he had a bargain to drive promising some advantages for any favor he might receive. Besides, he was never more in want of such a person than at the present moment, and half-fancied that the devil had sent him for the peculiar emergency. Still, he was not prepared to admit his own wants, or to accord his favor too readily. He answered the ruffian in the same spirit which prompted his first address.

"Rascal! You have at least lost none of your audacity. Rags, wretchedness, starvation, outlawry, none of these seem to humble you. You are a fool, Dick, with all the devil that you have in you. As for slashing me to pieces, I could blow your brains out before you could lift a finger. Do you suppose that because my troop is in the woods, that I have not help at hand?"

At this moment, a footfall behind the intruder, and between him and the door, caused him to turn his head; when he beheld a great tall angular backwoodsman, weapon in hand, who had just entered the apartment. His presence seemed to confirm Inglehardt's boast of succor, and occasioned a doubt, in the mind of the intruder, whether he himself was secure. In an instant his *couteau de chasse* was flourished in one hand, while he drew a pistol with the other.

"It'll be a bear fight first, I tell you—tooth and nail!" cried the ruffian desperately, and receding obliquely, so as to face both Inglehardt and the backwoodsman. The latter carried a bayonet at his side, but he seemed taken all aback by the suddenness of the affair.

"Pshaw!" said Inglehardt, with quiet scorn, taking up and tapping his snuff-box—"you will still be a fool, Joel Andrews. Do you suppose if I wished for your worthless life that I would suffer you to stand for a moment? Put up your weapon; and do you, Brownlee, take yourself off for a while. I do not want you."

"Bill Graham has come in from below, sir——"

"Well, let him wait."

Brownlee was retiring when Inglehardt called him back.

"Stay," said he — "send Graham up. I will finish with him first."

Brownlee went out, and Graham the next moment came in — another stout forester.

"Well Graham."

"Coulter's gone, sir, gone up and across South Edisto. He went yesterday, they tell me. He was about Chevillette's till night afore last, was then seen about the Pou Settlement, afterwards pushed off for Cannon's. Fry and Nathan both report his troop at fourteen or fifteen men."

"Fourteen or fifteen men! We can manage them, I think. Have you anything farther to report, Graham?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Well, go below, and remain with Brownlee. I shall probably call you after a while."

"And these fellows do your scouting, cappin?" said Dick of Tophet, after the other had departed, with something of contempt in his speech.

"Yes! Could you do better, Dick?"

"Couldn't I? — and thar's 'the Trailer' with me, who's worth a dozen of sich chaps."

"The Trailer! Dy you mean Brunson?"

"Jest so! He's worth a dozen of 'em."

"And is he with you?"

"He's not far off."

"Ha! very good. And what have you to say for yourself?"

"Well, I've got to say that I'm mighty hungry, and I want some good clothes."

"Faith you do; you have been rolling in the briers for a month, I fancy, and your desire is to be well fed, and decently clad, that you may look the better in the rope."

"I hain't got the feeling of rope about my neck this time, cappin."

"But you deserve it. You are a deserter from the arms of his majesty."

"I knows it."

"You have been serving in the ranks of Marion."

"Yes, I sarved them in sich a way that they made the rope ready for me on the Santee, and ef twarnt for the old devil's good help, I'd ha' been run up to a swinging limb, without a sign of a jacket on me."

"Why did you leave us?"

"Well, that little slaughtering business, which was all a haccident, as I may say, the killing of old Gregson and his wife."

"And wasn't that enough to hang a dozen such fellows as yourself. You plundered and murdered the people that gave you supper and a bed."

"Psho, cappin, that ain't the way to name it. The old man swore agin me for robbing him."

"And you did rob him."

"'Twant no robbery! I jest took a little change of clothes that I wanted, and that he hadn't much use for, and there was a little money in the pockets. I warn't to know that. And the old fellow set upon me like a mad-dog, and I down'd him."

"He had no weapons."

"I don't ax that question when a fellow takes me by the throat, cappin."

"But the wife—you stabbed her."

"Well, she flew at me too. There was them two upon me one, and they pulled and hauled me about as ef I was nobody. Flesh and blood can't stand everything."

"Joel Andrews, flesh and blood find such deeds as yours a hanging matter, even in war-time."

"Well, I know you ain't a-gwine to hang me for that business. Why, cappin, it's high time that it was clean forgot. It's a year old, by this time."

"And what have you been doing since in the way of burning, and robbing, and slaughtering?"

"Well, cappin, I don't care to be talking of sich little matters, and thar's no use for it. Least said's soonest mended. You see me here now, willing to make up and jine you, and sarve the king once more, and do good service."

"Until you run again! No! no! Joel Andrews, there's no trusting you. I'm afraid you've come to be hung."

"Not this time, cappin. A born rascal, like myself, is a leetle

too useful for you now to give him up. You're a-wanting me, at the bottom of your soul, this very minute."

"You are a born devil, Andrews."

"Well, I ain't so sure but it's the better for me, considerin' the sort of people I hev' to sarve."

"The father of lies is certainly your father."

"Edzackly; yet I makes a good use of the truth when I kin get it. I've got some truth now that you'd like to hear, cappin."

"Ah! you are for making terms for your life, Dick."

"Not so, cappin; I'm for making tarmes for sarvice, and employment, and a handsome payment. I knows very well, the valley of what I've got to tell you; and, I reckon, you knows me well enough to be sure that I wouldn't ha' been so quick to put myself into the halter, ef I hadn't something to say that would spell me out of it and something more. So, jest let's come to the marrow of the matter, right away, and jest you say that all's safe, and that I shall hev' a little of the king's kine [coin] in my pocket, and his picture to swear by in the ranks, off and on duty, and I'll fill your ears with a wagon-load of intelligence, sich as none of your green scouts could gather for you in a year of Sundays."

"Well, let's hear your intelligence."

"Is it a bargain, cappin?"

"I suppose so! Perhaps you won't hang this time, though hanging is as surely your doom, Dick, as if you were born to it. Still, I have no wish to play Jack Ketch for you."

"It's a long road to the sea, cappin. I don't think I'm to hang so long as the old devil has something for me to do, and that's jest as long as I'm in the sarvice of a cappin of rangers."

"Don't be saucy, Dick."

"Not for the world, cappin; but say out, up and down, am I to hev' the king's kine again, and to wear his pictur?—that's to say, s'posing I have something to tell you now, that you'd like to hear better, prehabs, than anything else that a man could tell you. You wants my sarvices, I know, and thar's Rafe Brunson, the Trailer, as good a scout as ever stept in mockasin, betwixt here and Tarrapin Heaven. You wants men and scouts badly, and then there's my news, you know."

"Well, Dick, I can't be too hard on you, and if your news is really worth anything—"

"It's worth everything. It'll put Willie Sinclair in your power; and if rope's the word, why you kin give him as many ties of it as you think proper."

"Do that, Joel Andrews, and you shall have all that you ask."

"It's a barg'in, and now jest you listen."

Inglehardt threw himself back in a listening attitude, helped his nostrils to a morsel of Scotch snuff, and motioned his companion to proceed. Dick of Tophet began his narrative. We, who already know, from actual observation, so large a portion of it, will not need to hear the elaborate recital of the ruffian. We shall content ourselves with abridging his report, which was sufficiently full, except in those portions where he had his own most villanous deeds to relate. Of these, there are many not known to us; but these are not essential to our story, and still less to a proper appreciation of his ruffianism. We shall begin with his pursuit of Sinclair.

"We tracked him up to Turkey hill, and thar we lost him. How, I don't know; but I never seed the Trailer so off the scent. But we guessed whar he was agwine, for we know'd pretty much that he was a'ter that gal of Travis. Well, we scouted the woods all about Holly-Dale, but we couldn't find the trail. How he did manage to kiver up his tracks thar's no saying. But thar he was."

"He used a boat."

"Well, thar's no tracking a boat in the water, and it's hard pulling one up stream, though an easy matter to go down. But knowing that he would be thar—for when a chap's a'ter a gal, he's apt to stick to the chase—we kept beating about the stamping-ground, sure to hev' him at the last. And we was sworn, both me and the Trailer, to hev' this same Willie Sinclair."

"Why were you so hot on *his* trail, Dick?"

"Look at these burns here, on my back, on my hands, on my feet. Why, I'm in a sort of fiery furnace now, all the time, though they ain't hafe as bad as they was three days ago."

"You don't mean to say that Sinclair burned you thus?" demanded Inglehardt, as the other displayed the scars.

"Well, 'twas all owing to him, and I may as well say, right

away, that he did it. 'Twas to git out of his roping that I had to walk into the fire, and lie down on the blazing lightwood."

Here the outlaw, having previously suppressed the account of his attempt on the Sinclair Barony, was compelled to supply his deficiencies. Inglehardt shook his head gravely.

"Hark you, Dick, this is a serious matter, for you, should it reach the ears of Lord Rawdon. Do you not know that old Sinclair is a friend to the royal cause, and intimate with Lord Rawdon?"

Well, I didn't ax about all sich matters, when I thought of the gould and silver at the Barony, and of them hundred gould guineas in the pockets of Willie Sinclair—and he is no king's man, as you know."

"Ah! ha! so you knew that Willie Sinclair had a hundred guineas in his pocket? And how did you know that? I can well understand, now, why you have been hunting him so handsomely."

"In course, thyar was reason for it. In course, I knew about the guineas, and how and where he got them."

Here he had to take another leap, and go back over a chasm in his narrative. The history was gradually unfolding itself clearly to his auditor.

"But I shan't tell you any more of the matter, cappin, ef you're not guine to make me safe. You talks as ef you'd hev' to give me up to Lord Rawdon, about that Barony affair."

"If he ever hears of it, and looks after you, Dick, I don't see how I'm to escape giving you up; and I certainly would do so, if he should require it—unless—"

"Well, unless what?"

"Why, unless you took the hint before the halter, and found your way into the swamp, and forgot entirely that the provost was waiting for you under a tree, with a plough-line dangling in his fingers."

"Oh! I see!"—with a chuckle—"well, I'll hold it as your promise that I'm to hev' a hint of the s'arch whenever they're aguine to begin it."

Inglehardt nodded his head with a smile, and again took snuff

"Well, a nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse. I'm satisfied.—So, as I was a-telling you—"

And the outlaw resumed his narrative, and detailed his unexpected discovery of Sinclair, in the conference with Travis.

"And they've made tarms to meet to-morrow at Holly-Dale. 'We'll be with you thar,' says Sinclair, 'at three o'clock edzackly.'"

Inglehardt listened to this statement with unexampled composure. He tapped his mull quietly, fed the reddened nostril, smiled complacently on the ruffian, and motioned him to proceed; though all the while a raging spirit in his bosom—a rousing fury—was goading him with the mortifying conviction that Travis had outwitted him, and that he was betrayed to his enemy and rival. Neither he nor Dick of Tophet ever fancied that the party destined to meet with Travis was to be any other than Sinclair himself.

Inglehardt sifted well the evidence of the outlaw, cross-examined him closely, and gleaned from him numerous particulars of his progress and discovery, which need not be again repeated. He rapidly formed his own plans as he listened.

"And now, cappin, I must hev' a little ready-money. Look at my clothes. I hain't had a full feed for a week; and as for a sup of Jamaica, the sweet critter is a perfect stranger to my lips."

In silence, Inglehardt rose, took a bottle of rum from his closet, pointed to a glass and bade the other help himself. Then, as Dick drank, he wrote a billet which he handed him.

"Take that to Elbridge. You will find him at Baltezegar's. He will provide you with clothes. Here are two guineas. Use them sparingly; the commodity is scarce, and will be scarcer, unless we can get the hundred which Sinclair carries in his pouch."

"Ah! I don't reckon he carries it about with him all the time. He's hid it away, I'm jubous, when he went to Turkey hill."

"Tell me, Dick, how was it, that, hating him as you do, and knowing of this money, you didn't shoot him down where he sat, when he talked with Travis. It would have pleased me quite as well, had you left me nothing to do in this matter."

This was said very quietly and mildly, without the slightest show of passion or vindictiveness.

"Wouldn't I hev' done it, ef thar had been been a decent chaince. But look at them dirty little puppies"—casting a pair of pistols on the table—"and say ef one would be sensible to take a risk on sich we'pons, at fifteen paces, agin two men, and one of them sich a man as Willie Sinclair?"

"But you have your knife besides."

"Yes; but it's a word and a blow with Sinclair; and I've had the weight of his fist upon my ear once a'ready. I tell you, big man as I am, and tough as an old alligator, I went down under his fist like a great bullock under the axe of a butcher. He's a most powerful fellow in the gripe, and I know'd them pistols worn't worth at over five steps. Then agin, I thought we'd have him sure enough to-morrow, ef he keeps his word to Travis."

"Ay, so we may have him; and I trust he will keep his word. You say he has no one with him?"

"None that we could get the wind of. He's sartinly got no troopers. We left St. Julien crossing the Santee with all the corn and cattle he could gather up."

Well, go and get your clothes and supper, and return to me in one hour. I shall see that you have immediate employment. We must have the Trailer in. Can you find him?"

"Oh! yes, after a sign. We agreed on one afore we divided. Two hours will help me to pick him up."

"I shall employ him also. Enough for the present. Away now, and supply yourself. Let me see you within the hour—and—Andrews—see that you keep sober."

"Jest so, captain, and ef I'm not to drink out of doors, I reckon you'll not think it onreasonable ef I wets my whistle agin afore I go."

And he coolly helped himself to a second and very potent stoup of the Jamaica. Inglehardt beheld the measure of the potation taken without any apprehension. He knew what that arid soil could receive without being flooded.

Inglehardt was alone in his chamber.

"So, Captain Travis, we at last fully understand each other. Now, at least, I fully understand *you*. You have embraced my enemy. You are now my enemy. Fool! you believe that rebellion is to triumph. You are for making terms with rebellion. You

would secure your spoils. But you shall do so through me only, and at one price. Bertha Travis shall be mine—she shall never wed with Willie Sinclair. I will bring you both to my feet, whence neither shall rise in safety, but to satisfy my desires.

“I have you now!

“Sinclair too in my power! He shall die. Why didn't this rascal shoot him down even where he sate. Cowed! cowed by a buffet! But the game is still in my hands.”

And his plans were all arranged by the time that Dick of Tophet reappeared. He was now clad in the dark green uniform faced with red, of the corps of mounted rangers which Inglehardt commanded. He carried a dragoon sabre, with pistols of larger calibre than those he had worn before. A shaggy cap of fur, too heavy for the season, formed a part of his equipment; and cap in hand—resuming the more respectful department of the soldier to his superior, he waited orders.

These were given, without delay, and he was despatched in less than half an hour, on a mission, which involved the finding and employing of Brunson, the Trailer, and a further duty which they were to take together.

We are not yet permitted to know what are the plans of Inglehardt. They must develop themselves. Enough to know that he was subtle, cool, calculating, vigilant, taking no rest, no respite, while the game was in progress. He was busy all night, and threw himself down for a few hours' sleep only when the day was near its dawn. His force, we may mention, with late additions, had grown to thirty troopers, all told.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SMILES AND SUNSHINE—BLOWS AND BONDS.

THE game of war, unlike that of chess, admits too greatly the interposition of fortune, to leave skill, however admirable, any security from vicissitude. It was a wise superstition of Sylla, which made him ascribe all his successes, however great, the exercise of his own genius, courage and caution, to the favors of the fickle goddess. The wise man will always thus make due allowance for those caprices of fortune against which it is not possible for any foresight to provide. As he will leave nothing to Fate which can be encountered by judgment and precision, so will he rise above the reverses which are apt to flow from conditions over which he can exercise no control. He will suffer himself neither to forget his prudence in success, nor sink into despondency from failure. The soul for the great struggle implies always great equanimity of temper and a cheerful fortitude.

The players at this game of war in our humble legend, Sinclair and Inglehardt, have placed their men, decided upon their game, exercised the *coup d'œil* with ample and deliberate vision, and have staked very considerable issues upon the result. We are to understand that each has made his arrangements for the conflict according to his resources and his best ability, and these have been put in motion, in accordance with the degrees of knowledge, which they severally possess, of the conditions under which they work. It is not the least difficult feature in this game of war, that *the facts* are so rarely to be grasped with certainty and entireness by any military genius. Inglehardt, assuming, according to all the information he could obtain, a certain state of things for Sinclair, has made himself, in his own notion, very sure of the result. He has omitted none of the precautions which could make the results certain. And

this, too, without any open display either of his objects or resources. His troop has disappeared from the immediate vicinity of Orangeburg. His preparations have been also made for his own personal departure—at a certain hour. Meanwhile, he surrenders himself up to apparent idleness. He lounges about the house of the widow Bruce, with an air of lassitude which seems to deprive him of all his energies. He expects a visiter, in fact, and would have him suppose that nothing has undergone any change in his feelings, his purposes, his conduct. He is, to the last, a creature full of stratagem. He is playing his game even while he seems drowsing over it.

And what is Sinclair about? At present he is not in the field, that we can see. He has eluded our vision. But, knowing him as we do, we may take for granted that his game occupies all his thought—that he is somewhere, in some quarter of the field, making his preparations also—exercising the uttermost forethought—providing against possible reverses—bringing all his faculties to bear against the coming necessity. He, too, has his stratagems, but they contemplate only single objects. They are not complicated like those of Inglehardt. He prefers the open to the sly game—the manly to the merely cunning. His anxieties are great—greater than those of Inglehardt, since he has a greater stake in the game. He stakes, on the issue, other purposes than those which simply affect himself! Let us suppose him at work, as he ought to be, and leave him for the present to his secret operations.

What visiter does Inglehardt expect? Whom does he desire to delude with an appearance of apathy, which is so totally untrue to what he has done, and what he contemplates doing, that day? He contemplates another meeting, and trial of wits, with Travis, before those revelations are finally made which shall strip both parties of the mask.

And what of Travis? He has risen from a sleepless couch full of anxieties. He feels how much he also has at stake, in the game which is to be played to-day. His night's reflections have tended greatly to inspire him with the anxieties which oppressed Sinclair, and to make him feel the impending peril to his fortunes. He is somewhat touched too, by the reflection that his selfishness has been exacting; and that, in holding

Sinclair to the arrangements for the interview assigned for the afternoon, and under threatening circumstances, he has been unnecessarily tenacious of his own objects, to the great hazard of other parties. But a life of selfishness is not to be rebuked in a moment. He has been a hard and exacting man always; and he silences his self-reproaches, with the reflection that it is too late now to amend his fault. That it is now impossible to see Sinclair and make other arrangements.

But his reflections have made him grave; and secretly they have somewhat tended to the growth of a more trusting faith and more generous impulses in his heart. Having eaten breakfast in silence, he orders his horse, and calls Bertha Travis into his chamber. There he produces a little tin case which might contain a dozen sheets of paper folded compactly. He holds it in his hands for a short space in silence, as if doubtful of his purposes. Bertha gazes on him with anxiety. Travis was a person of a hard nature, not easily moved to exhibit his emotion; still less was he given to show any despondency of spirit, even in moments of reverse and disaster. The unusual depression of mood under which he labored had arrested the anxious attention of both his wife and daughter while he sat at table. This depression was now so much more decided that the girl could not forbear referring to it, and asking the reason. He answered her:—

“I am about to ride down to Orangeburg, where I trust, in one hour, to finish all the business I shall ever have with Richard Inglehardt and the British commissariat.”

“I am so glad, father.”

“Yet something depresses me, Bertha—something like a presentiment of evil. I must go. This is the day for my monthly closing of accounts, and I must not be absent from my post, lest it lead Inglehardt to suspicion. You know enough to understand that he has cause of suspicion. You know him too well, and his objects, not to understand that, with him, to suspect is to watch, and follow, and if need be, strike. In brief, I am not sure of my ground, and events, of the highest importance, are ripening to-day, which, if successful, will relieve me of *him*—relieve me of many anxieties besides—and relieve me of all future connection with the British army. As a matter of course,

my future hope must depend upon the success of the whigs. It is due to myself, my child, to assure you that my present decision has been mainly taken because of your relations with Major Sinclair. But for these, I should never, perhaps, until too late, have had my eyes opened to the *rights* of the American cause, and to its probable success. The desire to see you happy, with a man whom I honor, as much as you love, has unsealed my vision, and taught me better lessons of my country. It is probable that Inglehardt, whom I have long baffled, is partly the possessor of my secret policy. I would save you from him, even if I should not save myself; for his is the very soul of treachery, and, I may find myself in his grasp at the very moment when I flatter myself I am wholly out of it. Now, I wish you to pledge me solemnly, whatever shall happen to me—no matter what you hear—no matter what *my* situation, that you will never marry *him*!"

The girl smiled as she replied:—

"Surely, my father, that needs no pledge—no solemn promise. I know no being whose presence I so much loathe, as that of Richard Inglehardt."

"I believe it—I know it; and I know that, with a free choice left you, there could be no danger that you would ever place yourself in the power of so cold-blooded and selfish a tyrant. But you may not be allowed a choice. There may be situations in which you may be placed, in which you may deem it a duty to sacrifice yourself for others—sacrifice your own heart—for others; for a father's life, for example."

"Oh! surely, my dear father, there is no danger which now threatens you."

"No! perhaps not! Danger, no! None, at least, which does or can do more than threaten. But who is secure—who can be secure—at such a time as this, and in the present condition of the country? Danger is all about us, more or less threatening of aspect. We are between two fires. There are two great combatants in the field, both insisting upon our allegiance, both able to hurt, neither quite strong enough to protect us. In such cases the wise man takes all the precautions that he can, and with the best, still feels that his prospect is everywhere clouded with uncertainty. We are in a perilous con-

junction now, and great events are pending, in which one of the ships must go down. Which? I have endeavored to steer my way in safety, more with regard to my family than myself. I have determined now upon a course which involves much uncertainty; a course which must make this man Inglehardt a decided enemy."

"He is not your friend now."

"He is no man's friend; but there's no strife between us; we are on terms; but such only as belong to selfish objects. He finds me useful—would make me profitable—aims at your hand—or, rather, at the fortune which he supposes you will inherit. But I should writhe in my grave, Bertha, did I know that he were the possessor of either."

"Never fear, dear father! I loathe and detest him."

"Yet women have been compelled to marry the very object of their loathing."

"Never shall the case be mine."

"Remember, Bertha, I hold this as your solemn pledge, as it were above the grave. I shall expect you to keep it whatever may happen. Whatever you hear—if tidings are brought you that I am in the hands of my enemy—in chains—threatened with death—a sudden and a shameful doom—nay, should you get a letter from my hand requiring you to wed with Richard Inglehardt, as the price of my life and safety—heed it not! Be sure that it is a forgery, or that it has been wrung from me by tortures which have left me incapable of a true thought, or an honest desire."

"Oh! my father, why conceive these fearful things?"

"No matter! You will heed and obey my present wishes. You will cling to the pledge you make me now. You will never wed with Inglehardt. Nay, so soon as Sinclair asks your hand, promise me to give it him. I could die cheerfully to-morrow were I sure that you were his wife, and safe in the honor of his name. Do I have your promise, Bertha?"

"Dear father, it is easy to make it. My heart has long been his—his wholly."

"Enough! It is your pledge to me at a moment, Bertha, when I may be speaking to you from the grave."

"Do not entertain such gloomy thoughts."

"I am no longer a young man. I am engaged in perilous enterprises. I have fearful enemies. Even now I ride to Orangeburg to meet with Inglehardt. His policy is not easily fathomed. He feels that you hate him. He knows that I do. If he suspects that I am about to free myself utterly from his control, it is difficult to say what he will not attempt."

"Why go, then? why put yourself into his power? why not at once join Willie Sinclair, and let us all fly across the Santee—now, this very day, this hour?"

"Easier said than done! No! I must see through this day here, on the Edisto—close it if possible at Holly-Dale. Tomorrow—but sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. Here is a letter to Sinclair. Take it and this case. Should I fail to be here when Sinclair arrives, give this letter and case into his hands. He knows what to do with them. Your mother has my instructions also. She will put everything into his hands should I fail to appear at the appointed hour. Keep these safely and secretly, and about you. Do not leave the house. Say to Sinclair that I leave everything to him, and have here given him the best proofs that I confide in the magnanimity of the person he will bring with him, to procure for my family the safety which I seek for them; and now, my child, one kiss—one embrace—and leave me awhile with your mother."

The girl threw herself into his arms—threw her arms about his neck, and kissed and clung to him fondly.

"Where's Henry?" he asked. "I have not seen him this morning."

"He has gone on a mission for Willie. He went by daylight this morning."

"Up or down?"

"Up."

"Kiss him for me, Bertha. Love him well! I would like to have clasped the boy once more to my heart."

And—strange sight to Bertha—the big tear grew and glistened in the eye of the hard and otherwise selfish man. Hers were streaming freely. Once more he kissed and embraced her with a nervous fondness, then gently pushed her away.

"Now go and send your mother to me."

With a sudden impulse the girl once more threw her arms

around her father's neck, once more kissed him affectionately, then, as if fearing to trust herself to speak, turned away suddenly and left the chamber in silence. In a few minutes her place was supplied by her mother.

The husband put his arms affectionately about his wife, drew her to his bosom, and looked earnestly and tenderly in her face. They had been wedded nearly thirty years: the alliance between them had been one, which, in spite of his hard and selfish nature, had been productive of a certain and equal degree of felicity—perhaps, in as great, as is ordinarily shared between married people who indulge in no extravagant expectations from life, or from human affections. She knew his frailties, but he had been faithful to her. He had been an indulgent husband and a kind father. His evil aspect had been usually turned away from his household.

“Lucy,” he said, “I will not distress you by a repetition of our conference last night. You know the nature of the dangers which I apprehend. You also know that I can not well avoid to meet them. If I face them boldly, they may lose their character of danger. If I skulk them, they become decidedly a peril. But, no more of this. Anticipating the worst, I have come to the conclusion that you must fly to the Santee, to my sister, the moment that you discover that anything has happened to me. Should I fail to return to-day, you must prepare for immediate flight. Sinclair will see to the arrangements; at all events, see to hurrying away the negroes, under a proper escort. We may trust to his honor. More: it is my wish that his marriage with Bertha should take place—if he is willing—as soon as you can learn that I am in bonds or danger from Inglehardt. Were I sure of this marriage, I should be better reconciled to every danger. But I trust everything to Sinclair's honor and discretion. He has both in eminent degree. He is generous and noble. His conduct has shamed mine, and I have to deplore that its effect was too slowly felt to enable me to save him the peril which now threatens both of us equally. The stroke which places me at the foot of Inglehardt, will be one which will descend at the same moment upon his head. Ay, and upon the head of another, whose peril I tremble to think upon. But Sinclair is forewarned, and, I trust, forearmed. At

all events, he is vigilant—a man of great precautions—and, I am in hopes, of resources adequate to the present exigency. There! I have told you all that I now need to say. Remember, you are not to delay in what you do, in the indulgence of vain fears, or as vain anticipations, touching my fate. The moment you find me missing, that very moment, if possible, carry out my instructions. Send off the negroes, and fly yourself with our children. In my letter to Sinclair, I have declared to him my wish that he should marry Bertha, without delay, if the proceeding conflicts with no earnest necessity or important policy of his own. And now, my wife, we part! God bless and keep you safely, whatever fate may befall me!”

The stately, and we may say, the noble old lady was sensibly touched. The present attitude of her husband ennobled him. He was behaving generously—far more than was his wont—far more than we can well conceive from the few facts which we have arrayed in this narrative by which to illustrate his character;—generously, in a readiness to sacrifice himself for his children, at a moment when he might possibly save himself, by their sacrifice. His heart was not wholly the home of selfish passions.

A brief twenty minutes, perhaps, were consumed in this interview between the father and mother, when he emerged, composed seemingly, from the chamber. A fond and lingering look he cast about him over the fair fields and old groves of Holly-Dale. The place never looked so beautiful before. It seemed the very home of peace. Then he quietly mounted his horse, and turned downward, for the road to Orangeburg.

He was gone from sight in a few moments; and, sadly apprehensive—for he had imparted his own presentiments to both wife and daughter—they watched together, for long and in silence, over the route which he had taken.

He pursued his way to the village without interruption; proceeded to his room at Baltezegar's, where he kept his office, and where he destroyed his papers, such as he did not think proper to preserve. These he stuffed into his pockets. Of course, he was private in his office when these duties were performed. Soon he had visitors, and some that he knew were only spies. He met them, and baffled their inquisition with a calm visage,

and the resources of a cool brain and a ready mind. Inglehardt knew, meanwhile, of his arrival; knew of his visitors; guessed at his secret employments, and smiled at his progress. He knew, too, that Travis would be with him in the course of the morning—an hour, perhaps, before he was prepared to return to Holly-Dale. Inglehardt waited with the exemplary patience, but vigilant eye of the spider, who, in his hole, sees the fly circling or loitering about the distant meshes which he has stretched around him, unsuspected, in all directions.

“Keep him in sight!” was his simple command to all his agents. He, meanwhile, showed himself quite at ease; languidly lounging in his oaken chair, in loose trousers, and a linen morning-gown, his pipe well replenished, sending up occasional curling clouds; head thrown back, and heels upon the table. His eternal snuff-box lay at hand, open, ready for use whenever he should have a companion. He was thus habited, and *posed*, when Travis sought him, which he did about twelve o’clock.

“Ah! my dear captain, how are you? And how is that excellent lady Mrs. Travis—and how is the fair creature of my constant thought, your daughter?”

This was said drawlingly, with a languid smile upon the speaker’s lips, and an air of the most perfect complacency.

“D—d puppy!” was the self-spoken feeling of Travis, who yet replied quietly as if totally unruffled:—

“Pretty well; a little oppressed in this hot weather.”

“It is growing terrible. I can hardly endure it, I am dreaming nightly of a siesta upon an iceberg. No breath of air here last night. I am in the wrong chamber. I must certainly see Bruce to-day, and get another room. A sleepless night is followed by a drowsy day. I am not well awake this morning—have done nothing—can do nothing. Yet, I have enough to do. I ought to be stirring to see after that rebel, Coulter. Yet, the very idea of marching in this hot sun is terrible. By the way, do you hear anything of the fellow?”

“Not a syllable!”

“I fancy he has gone toward the Savannah. Yet I can gather no intelligence. I must certainly be moving, yet dare not with my awkward squad. I must get these ungainly fel-

lows into something like military order, before I can hope to make a successful dash with them. In a week, perhaps—”

Here he paused, and stirred his pipe and replenished it.

“He talks too freely; all at once,” was the thought of Travis. “He means mischief.” But he said nothing to this effect; barely asked after the news, and responded in sympathy to his companion’s complaints about the weather; and then, practising after Inglehardt’s subtle fashion, he added:—

“I dread the thoughts of taking the sun homeward at my usual hour, and shall probably stay till the cool of evening.”

“Right!” said Inglehardt. “I shouldn’t be persuaded to that ride, on such a day as this, for a hundred guineas. I am half dead with the heat in the shade—here even, where you see there is an eastern exposure. But what’s the hour?”

“Twelve by the sun!”

“Heavens! and I am hardly awake! and can’t wake. You see my *deshabille*. What is to be done? It is impossible for me to do anything till evening; yet my ragged rascals ought to be seen to.”

“Where have you got them?”

“Somewhere in the woods. I left it all to Fry. The little rascal is a sort of salamander—don’t mind heat at all—rather loves it, I think. Last night, I found him dancing, with a dozen women in the camp, to the music of the old fiddle of Cato Cusack.”

“Has that old African turned up again?”

“Yes! Heaven knows where he has been for the last six months. But there he was last night, lively as ever, sitting upon the end of a whiskey-barrel, and going ‘the Black Joke’ at race-horse speed, while Fry was leading off with the fattest and yellowest sandlapper of a woman I ever saw. Where the women came from, all of them, I can not guess; but there they were, merry as monkeys, if not quite so active, sweating away their ill humors, in a motion that almost overcame me with horror. I perspired at the very sight of their fury.”

“I thought Fry too severe an orderly for such indulgences in camp.”

“He is strict enough on drill; but, as he says—‘what’s to be done? Drill’s over; danger’s distant; we must keep the

fellows in a good humor !, When I asked him where the women came from—he answered, pertly enough, ‘Why, captain, we all think from heaven, since they make us so happy while they stay !’ Happy in a sweat and stew ; for I fairly felt myself steamed to faintness in the spectacle. Faugh ! I sweat with the remembrance. But the exercise was not a bad one for the troop. Let them complain of heat on duty if they dare ! I did not discourage them, but sent them the materials for a bowl of punch, and left them happier than ever. Fry tells me, this morning, that they kept it up all night. They are, of course, fit for nothing to-day.”

“Now,” thought Travis, “this is all a lie—a mere invention—meant to blind me. I don’t believe a word of it.”

But he expressed himself very differently.

“Faith, it must have been a curious sight. Such a night too. Where the d—l could these women have come from ? Not the village ?”

“No ! not that I know. They looked like nobody that I had ever seen. Yet they seemed to know me. But foul weather brings out very strange birds. You say it’s twelve ?”

“Yes ! it was just twelve when I came.”

“Let us have some punch, Travis. Nothing like rum punch for hot weather. Come, you do the thing better than I. You have the knack of it. Make a good stoup for us both. I would drink anything which would put a little more life into me. I have no more energy in such weather as this, than a snake in December.”

Travis made the punch, and drank—but he observed that the other only tasted the beverage, for which he had expressed so much unctuous appetite, and set it down beside him. He took snuff in preference, and there was a pause in the conversation. At length, Inglehardt said : “Well, Travis, when am I to visit Holly-Dale ? Shall it be to-morrow ?”

“As you please.”

“You have broached our suit to the fair Bertha ?”

“Yes.”

“And—she does not frown ?”

“I trust that Bertha will show herself submissive to her father’s wishes.”

"If not genial to mine! Well, I must be content. She knows me not. She will think better of me with better acquaintance, and, after marriage. I make no question that love will come in to the support of duty. To-morrow then, Travis, I may hope to see her. She will then receive me. Meanwhile, my dear good father-in-law, that is to be, make the way as clear as possible. Of course, you have suffered her to understand the necessity of this union?"

"She is fully informed, Inglehardt, of my wishes."

"Ah!—and she does not fly out—does not wear the sullens; She smiles, I hope."

"All I can say is, Inglehardt, that the dear child will prove submissive to my will. I can not promise you her heart. I do not deceive you, no more than she seeks to deceive me, that she would prefer another. But enough, if I repeat that she will yield herself to what I require."

"To-morrow then! To-morrow!"—and, with the slightest smile upon his features, Inglehardt fed his nostrils from the snuff-box.

Travis rose to depart.

"What! Whither would you go, and at this hour? not to Holly-Dale surely. Why, man, you will drop upon the road."

"No! I think I shall order my dinner at Baltezegar's at three. It is too hot for riding. Besides, I have some matters to settle at my office, which will keep me to that hour. It will suffice if I reach Holly-Dale by dark."

"You are wise! A hundred guineas should not tempt me to take the road at this hour."

And, with some more talk, in which each sought to mystify the other, they separated.

"Cunning scoundrel!" muttered Inglehardt, as the other left the house—"he fancies that he blinds me. But I shall have eyes on him at every turning."

Travis, meanwhile, took his way to Baltezegar's.

"Jack," said he, "let me have a dinner here at three o'clock—dinner for *two*, remember."

That he had given this order, reached Inglehardt in twenty minutes after.

"Dinner for *two*, and at *three* o'clock. Who can the other

be? Can he be serious? His game may be a deeper one than I suspect. At all events, it shall not change my plans. He is secure, whether he goes home, or stays here. This day shall unmask his batteries as well as mine. The scheme shall stand as it is. Travis may dine here, yet Sinclair, not the less, dine at Hollydale. I shall have him there, whether Travis stays or goes. Have him!"

And the heretofore languid speaker, to whom the weather had been so oppressive—who would not take the road at that hour for the world, proceeded to gird himself up for action. Having dressed himself for the saddle, he stole out of the house, by the back-door, into the yard, and made his way to the stables. There he met one of his rangers, as if awaiting him.

"Have my orders been obeyed, Elias?"

"Yes, sir; the men are all gone with Sergeant Fry. None remain, sir, but myself and Witsell, as you bade."

"Good! Has my horse been taken into the swamp opposite?"

"Witsell has him there, sir, with his own and mine."

"Is the boat ready?"

"Ready, sir—hidden among the bushes above the bridge."

"Do not leave this place then, till you hear from me."

Meanwhile, Travis chatted with Jack Baltezegar on indifferent affairs, or such as seemed to be so to the honest landlord.

"Inglehardt has picked up a clever troop, he tells me."

"I reckon over thirty men, and pretty clever fellows some of 'em."

"They must have had rare doings at the camp last night—dancing 'till daylight. But where did all the women come from? Are the girls of the village in the habit of dancing in a ranger's camp, all night?"

"What! our girls! Never a one of 'em. It's not easy to get 'em there even in broad daylight, and when they're a drilling. But what camp are you speaking of?"

"Inglehardt's."

"Where is it? He's moved his troop off into the swamp more than two days. Except Fry, the orderly, 'Lias Barnett and Tom Witsell, and, perhaps, a small scouting party that came in by day-peep this morning, he's got nobody here."

“Isn’t that imprudent—now that Coulter’s about?”

“Well, there’s no saying what’s imprudent, or what is not, with Cap’n Inglehardt, he’s so knowing. But it’s hard to catch him napping, and if Coulter should make a dash at the village, I reckon ’twould be through ambush that’s set for him. It’s hard to catch such an old weasel asleep.”

Travis picked up some other items, all of which tended to confirm him in the opinion that Inglehardt was subtly working against him, and that the sooner he should take his departure the better. But this required some nicety of management. Repeating his directions to Baltezegar, touching the dinner at three, he jumped on his horse, and rode up to the jail, where there were some Irish prisoners in safe-keeping, charged with mutiny and strong drink, and for whom he had been required to furnish clothing. He saw the jailer, and spoke with him awhile, then rode off, rounded the jail, and got into the cover of the woods on the south, whence he moved round, making a complete circuit, mostly under cover, of fence, house and thicket, till he found himself in the swamp below the bridge. Hence he felt his way up, still in the swamp thicket, till the bridge was reached, when, looking out carefully in the direction of the village, and the coast seeming to be clear, he boldly emerged from his shelter, crossed the bridge, and dashed upward in a canter, which soon left his enemies—all of whom he knew—in the rear.

But ten minutes after he disappeared from sight, Richard Inglehardt, in the uniform of his troop, sword at his side and pistols in his holsters, emerged from the thicket accompanied by two troopers.

He smiled pleasantly as he said:—

“We may walk our horses for a while, men, and leave our friend to make use of all his advantages.”

And they took the way upward in the direction of Holly-Dale, though the troopers knew not whither they were going, or what they had to do. Inglehardt made no unnecessary revelations of his purpose.

Meanwhile Travis sped on without interruption. He was, however, too old a stager to be guilty of the boy-folly of hallooing before he had quite cleared the bush. He knew his enemy,

and knew that the very languor of Inglehardt was an omen of ill—that his smile was a danger—that all his horrors of heat and exertion were mere affectations, and he believed frauds—active employment had somewhat lessened the presentiments of Travis, but had not wholly dissipated them, and though he rode on for three miles without seeing a human being, he was yet by no means surprised or confounded when, at that distance from the village, he found his horse's bridle suddenly seized by a sturdy fellow, who leaped out of the copse, at a short turn of the road, and forced the steed back upon his haunches.

“'Light, cappin,” said the voice of the stranger—“we wants you!”

Travis answered with a bullet. His hand was firm, his blood prompt, and at the first bound of the assailant, he had drawn a pistol from his pocket, and fired full at the fellow's head.

“Gimini!” cried the ruffian, “he's cut off my ear!”

At the same instant, and before Travis could draw another pistol, a blow from behind, with a heavy bludgeon, from a third hand, tumbled him from his horse. For a few moments he lay insensible. When he recovered, he found himself in the deepest thicket, his hands and feet bound firmly, his pockets rifled of all his papers, and two men whom he did not recognise standing over him. Before he could quite recover himself, to ask the reason of the outrage, Inglehardt and his two followers rode into the thicket. The eyes of the loyalist captain and Travis met. Neither spoke. A sweet smile was upon the face of the former. The latter felt too surely the impotence of his anger to allow it to appear in his features. He simply met the gaze of his enemy with an immovable countenance.

“Dinner for two at Baltezegar's, Captain Travis—why are you here? But your companion will wait. I will report at Holly-Dale your engagements for the day. Should I meet Major Willie Sinclair, I shall be most happy to send him on to you. You will find the ride back a warm one. Good morning, Captain Travis, good morning.”

Travis could only look at his enemy the vindictive hate which he felt. How he longed for the fabulous power of the Medusan head that he might look his banterer into stone. The loyalist captain smiled complacently in reply to the venomous

glance of his captive. Ere he rode away, he called Dick of Tophet, and Brunson, the Trailer, aside, and said :—

“If you have time for it, before the men can wind their way up, then see that Captain Travis is carried down to Green Bay thicket, and hidden away there till our return. That is the place of rendezvous, remember. But, if time should not serve, leave him here, tied securely and in cover. You need not be careful to turn his eyes up to the sun. Let him lie at ease. You are not to forget the more important commission which I have given you. You are not to engage in any occupation but the one. While I see to the securing of Sinclair, you contrive to carry off the girl. That is the one duty which I assign you. Neglect it for no other. And see that you do it tenderly. Harm her, by word or act, and you hang for it! Beware too how your fingers incline to plunder. You will do nothing of that sort. I will see that your reward hereafter shall compensate your forbearance, which I well know will be the most painful trial of your virtues.”

“Vartues don’t bother us much, cappin,” answered Dick with a grin.

“See that your vices are not more troublesome. Beware how you offend me now. Your own safety depends on your good behavior to-day.”

“Good behavior, cappin! that’s to-say, ef we does jest what you wants us to do.”

“Certainly! your good behavior lies only in your obedience to orders.”

“We’re to catch and carry off the gal, while you’re busy with the major.”

“Yes, and to trouble yourself with nothing else—to be diverted by nothing from the one duty. Treat her respectfully, use no ill language in her ears; and, beyond the degree of violence necessary for carrying her off safely, see that you do not harm her. Remember that! But see that she does not escape you! Your life upon it, my good fellows; and if you succeed, look to me for ample rewards.”

With these words he rode away, moving still upward, and keeping close in the cover of the woods, on a line equi-distant from the high-road and the river. The two ruffians remained

for a while after he was gone, but without offering to carry Travis down to the Green Bay thicket, which had been declared the place of rendezvous. They contented themselves with seeing that he was securely roped, and with searching his pockets—even ripping up his saddle, in their thirst for plunder, and possessing themselves of the money he had about him, not overlooking his watch, knife, and other trifles. All these were safely disposed of and out of sight. His papers were opened, and scattered about the woods. Dick of Tophet found himself a gainer by a forced swap of horses with his captive, coolly appropriating that of Travis, and fastening the poor hackney of Pete Blodgit in its place, to a neighboring tree.

“Kin we carry him down, Dick, to the bay?” demanded the Trailer.

“Hain’t got the time. All the time we’ve got, I wants you to put upon my ear. The bloody bullet of this varmint hes gi’n me such a mark as will last for ever.”

The Trailer proceeded to examine the injury, and employ some rude surgery upon it; Travis being permitted to see the process where he lay; the fierce glance of Dick of Tophet every now and then, at every twinge of the wound under Brunson’s fingers, speaking daggers to the captive, which the occasional comments of the Trailer were not calculated to disarm.

“’Twas a mighty close graze, Dick,” quoth the Trailer, to his hurt comrade, “as good a hole as ever a sharp knife worked in a sow’s ear! And as you say, it’s marked you for life! You’ll have to put a gould ring in it.”

“I’ll wring his bloody neck for him, afore he gits out of the wood; but make haste or we’ll be too late for the scrimmage.”

“Kin we leave him whar he is?”

“Why not? He kaint stir a peg, and if he should whoop who’s to hear him? We’ll find him hyar, I reckon, safe enough, when we gits back. Look you, you mischievous, bloody, pistol-shooting d—d old skunk of a rebel, do you see that you lies close, and without kicking. I’m a guine up now to captivate your wife and da’ghter, and all the combustibles of your plantation; and before I’m done with them and you, I’ll find satisfaction enough to stop up this bloody hole that you’ve made hyar eternally in my ear. Oh! I’ll never forgit you for it,

as long as I can bite or kick, or as long as you've got the flesh for feeling a sharp wiper's tooth a-meeting in you! I'll hev it out of you, in every way, you see. And I'll make you feel it first through wife and da'ghter. And you may think about what's a-going on at home, with my help, and others, while you're hyar, tied neck and heels, and without the arms to keep off the meanest varmints in the woods."

We abridge the blackguardism and the denunciations of the ruffian, who soon after rode away with his companion, leaving Travis to utter solitude, fast-fettered, with scarcely freedom of limb enough to avert his eyes from the glare of the sun, without hope of defence, help, or extrication. What were his reflections? Not altogether selfish. He was humbled, hopeless, in pain, in danger, but, if he thought of his own situation, it was to lament his incapacity to strike for the defence of his wife and daughter. The shocking speech of the ruffian had filled his soul with terrors—had taught him what to fear. The hot scalding tears rolled from his eyes, with the sense of his dreary impotence.

"Good God!" exclaimed the wretched man—"what is to become of Bertha—my child—my child—in the power of this infernal tyrant! And Sinclair too, and the great man whom I would bring into this snare! But I thought I had all sure. I took every precaution. Oh! that I were free, if it were only to strike one blow at the head of that arch-villain!"

But why listen to his unavailing regrets? Our anxieties require that we should fly to Holly-Dale, even as his thoughts fly thither, and witness for ourselves those events which, with so much horror, he anticipates.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HOW THE GAME MAY BE SNARED AT THE COST OF THE HUNTER.

A LITTLE before three o'clock, Major Sinclair crossed the river in the dug-out, having with him a single companion. Having secured the boat under the usual cover, the shady willows that overhung the stream on the edge of the swamp above the headland of Holly-Dale, the two took their course through the thickets until they drew near the dwelling. This they soon approached and entered from the rear, having watched their moment when the coast seemed quite clear, and kept themselves under cover of the foliage as long as it sufficed for concealment. They entered the hall which opened from the passage-way, and found themselves alone. It was the dining-room also, and the table was spread, but no person of the family was present. The ladies were in the chamber of Mrs. Travis, an apartment opposite the hall, and opening in like manner from the passage.

Leaving his companion in the hall, Sinclair stepped into the passage, and had hardly done so when he was met by Bertha. The countenance of the damsel was full of anxiety.

"Have you seen my father, Willie?"

"No! Is he not here? we are but just landed from the river. He was to meet us here at three. It is not quite the hour."

"He is not here," answered Bertha, striving to conceal her uneasiness; "but I hope he will be back in season. He had to go down to Orangeburg this morning—and—and—he seemed very much troubled—very uneasy. Oh! if anything has happened to him."

"Don't be alarmed. What should happen to him?"

"I don't know. But he himself was apprehensive, and gave

me some commissions to you, some papers—here they are—in the event of anything happening to prevent his presence.”

“Ah! the papers!—a moment, dear Bertha,” as he took the papers and read the letter to himself.

“Now excuse me for a moment. These papers are for another, and the sooner he has them, and examines them, the better. These will set everything right—set your father fairly before the country, and make his future course free. One moment, dear.”

“Come back to me. Mother wants to see and speak with you in her chamber.”

Sinclair hurried into the hall, and, with a few words, delivered the papers into the hands of his companion. That person was soon seated and busied in their examination. Meanwhile, Sinclair returned to Bertha, and accompanied her to the chamber where Mrs. Travis awaited them.

He found that good lady calm but very serious.

“Sinclair,” said she, “I fear something has happened to Captain Travis.”

“I hope not. Why should you fear?”

“He has failed to be back at the hour he appointed. I know that he was anxious to be here. He had apprehensions, too, and Inglehardt is as treacherous as a friend as he is venomous as a foe.”

“I do not see that there is any occasion for alarm. Inglehardt has every reason to keep on terms with your husband.”

“Yes, so long as my husband will keep on terms with him. But you know, as well as I do, that Mr. Travis had determined to break with him.”

“But how should Inglehardt know that?”

“It is possible. He is all cunning. Besides, he has his spies everywhere, and Mr. Travis mentioned that he had certainly made one discovery—of which you know—which would certainly make him suspicious.”

“That is true! But unless he has discovered much more, the only present result of that discovery must be to make him more watchful.”

“And, no doubt, he has been so; and to what other discoveries this watch may have conducted him is the question. It

certainly looks suspicious, that, anxious as Mr. Travis was to get back in time to meet yourself and friend, and resolving to do so, he should fail just at this juncture, when his enemy is most suspicious, most watchful, and has most reason to be so. Mr. Travis is usually punctual to his word."

"And yet, my dear Mrs. Travis, a thousand motives, nay necessities, not involving danger so much as duty and a proper caution, may have delayed him. He had to put away and to destroy his papers, had to settle many interests, and small details before leaving Orangeburg—had to secure property—for, you are no doubt aware, that our present relations involved his withdrawal from all affinities with the British. The very fact that he left these papers with Bertha, to be delivered to me in the event of his not coming, showed that he himself anticipated some unavoidable delay, as a probability."

"Ah! Sinclair, he anticipated something more. He was very much depressed, and his mind labored with some gloomy presentiments."

"And well he might entertain some forebodings. His relations naturally involve the idea of embarrassment and danger. But I see not—

Here Bertha interposed:—

"Willie, I heard a horse—horses—I'm sure. Had you not better go, you and your friend, while you have time? Should anything have happened to my father, there's danger to you."

"She is right, Willie. Go! You have the papers! You will see that justice is done to my husband's object."

"If Mr. Travis has fallen into Inglehardt's clutches, it is too late to steal away," said Sinclair. "If he has arrested Mr. Travis, be sure that he has environed Holly-Dale with his rangers."

"Heavens! Willie, and you speak so coolly!" exclaimed Bertha.

"Fear nothing! I have striven to prepare for this contingency, and believe that I am ready. Henry is no doubt on his way, bringing down the troop of St. Julien, and I have despatched a trusty messenger to Coulter to bring up his troop also. They have full instructions in regard to every step that is to be taken. If Inglehardt is really about us, with his

rangers, he has got himself into a snare. From the moment when I conceived the possibility of his seeking me here, I resolved that he should find me, and find me prepared for him. I have endeavored so to provide as to crush him at a blow. Let St. Julien and Coulter reach us in season, and we have the scoundrel in his own meshes. We need but half an hour now."

"Ah!"—there were steps without—"you will not be allowed that half hour. There is certainly a tramp of horses, and—the door opens."

So it did—the door of the passage—then a footstep was heard, a light deliberate footstep, the tread measured—and the person entering was heard to pass into the hall.

Sinclair, with moccasined feet, stepped noiselessly to the window which looked out upon the court fronting the west. He came back with a slight smile upon his lips, and in a whisper—

"You are right. There are troopers on the edge of the wood. Can you find your way to the upper story, Bertha, without being heard from the hall?"

"Yes! I think so."

"Go, then, and look up the northwest avenue, note the great red oak that stands out in the centre of it, and if you discover a white handkerchief, or anything white gleaming from the boughs, sing cheerily some verse of one of your little musical ballads, so that I shall hear."

All this was said in a whisper. Bertha stole out into the passage and up the stairway, without waking a single echo.

Voices were heard in the hall. Sinclair stole to the door and listened. He returned in a moment.

"Do you think, my dear Mrs. Travis, that you can follow successfully the example of Bertha, and steal up-stairs without being heard?"

Alas! good Mrs. Travis was a lady of dimensions and bulk. She shook her head.

"Well," said he, "bide your time, and on the first sound of struggle or confusion, make your way up-stairs to Bertha, and fasten yourselves in. Leave this fellow to me."

"Who is it, Willie?"

"Inglehardt himself."

"Ah! and you take it so easily."

"Yes! I hope to take him easily."

And Sinclair again stole to the door, stole into the passage and listened. The old lady could hear the voices from the hall, which were earnest but not loud. In a moment, Sinclair was back, and without a word, he snatched up a light coverlet from the bed, and again disappeared from the apartment. Mrs. Travis wondered what he should want with such an agent dealing with such an enemy, and while she wonders, and while the event is doubtful, let us retrace our steps a moment to some of the antecedents of the affair.

Not a quarter of an hour before this, Inglehardt, accompanied by a single trooper, Fry, his orderly, might have been seen in a little thicket crouching behind the dairy. Hither his whistle had summoned a young mulatto, a boy of eighteen, to his presence. This fellow, a servant of Travis, had been long in the pay of Inglehardt.

"Well, Julius, has he come?"

"Yes, sir; he's in the hall now, a-reading papers."

"When did he come?"

"I don't know, sir; I was busy cleaning knife behind the kitchen, and old Molly, the cook, sir—you know old Molly—she's mighty hard 'pon me—"

"No matter about old Molly."

"Well, sir, she was a-moving about, and keeping me at the knives, sir, and I never see when the major come. But when I gone up-stairs with the knife-box, to put 'em on the table in the piazza, I catch a sight of 'em in the hall, sir, a-setting at the table with papers, a-reading. The room was dark, the winders most shut in, 'cause of the hot weather."

"Well, well! he is there?"

"Safe!"

"Nobody else—no troopers?"

"Never see the huff [hoof] of one, sir, 'cept what you fotch."

"You hear, Fry. Now, work round the house with the troop, and push in when you hear my bugle, but not a moment before."

"Where are you going, sir?"

"To the house."

"What if he makes fight? Sinclair is a powerful, strong man."

The other touched the pistols in his belt.

"I shall be able to manage him with these—at all events, keep him at a distance with them till you can answer my bugle."

"Very well, sir—as you please. But we had better make short work of it, sir—at a dash."

"No! I have another object. Besides, we have him sure. With thirty troopers upon him, he can neither fight nor fly with any hope of safety. Away, now, and be in readiness."

The orderly disappeared behind the bushes.

"Julius, was your young mistress with him?"

"Not when I look, sir. She been up-stairs in he room I reckon. But I 'spec' [expect] she's down with 'em now, onless he gone up to her."

"Why, scoundrel, you don't mean to say that he goes up to her chamber?"

"Don't know, sir; but they's mighty loving, when they gits together," and the mulatto grinned his own vicious nature as he spoke. Inglehardt looked at him with an expression of disgust.

"Mighty loving, are they?"

"Oh! there's no saying how sweet they is to one another."

"We shall dash the sweet with bitter. Go, now, and let me see you where I told you, and when."

The boy disappeared. Inglehardt lingered, as if in thought, though looking around him as if in expectation also. Suddenly the bushes parted behind him, and the grim, disfigured visage of Dick of Tophet showed itself.

"Ah! you are there? Well, see that you do your work effectually; and, hark you, Joel Andrews, no trespassing of any sort."

The other grinned only in reply. Inglehardt found it necessary to rebuke the grin with a stern look and speech.

"Hark you, Dick;—closer—here!"

The fellow drew nigh. Inglehardt, fixing his eyes upon him, said, in the lowest and sweetest tones:—

"If you disobey the slightest of my injunctions, Joel Andrews, you shall hang for it. Do you hear? Look me in the face, and comprehend, if you can, by what you see, that I have sworn it!"

“Oh! cappin, whet’s the use of being oneasy? Don’t I know what to do? Jest you fix the major, and I’ll save the gal, and be as kearful as her own mammy. I’ll wrap up my paws in a silk ‘Ingy,’ whenever I lays hands on her.”

Inglehardt did not exactly relish the tone of his subordinate; but as for subduing such a ruffian to sober paces, whether of soldiership or humanity, he well knew that the hope was out of the question. He could only renew his injunctions as earnestly as possible, and in those sweet equable tones which all who knew him well understood, were significant of his sternest moods, and leave the event to the Fates. They were hurrying him onward. He had no more time to lose.

Waving his hand expressively to Dick of Tophet, and the Trailer, who hung back in the bushes, his head just visible above them, Inglehardt immediately stole away in the direction of the dwelling, the approach to which prompted his reflections to return to a channel which had been opened by the salacious suggestions of the mulatto. The voice of Inglehardt was half audible as he murmured, going forward somewhat quickly:—

“I shall surprise him in her arms, no doubt—lipping it sweetly—turtle-doves of Holly-Dale—little dreaming of what awaits them! Ha! well, it has been long delayed, but I shall enjoy my triumph now. *Him* naught shall save! and her father’s life hangs on her compliance! Proud girl, I shall give you this day a lesson—teach you how to scorn the pretensions of Richard Inglehardt!”

It was his footstep that Bertha heard in the piazza, his that entered the passage—the hall! It was his voice that reached the ears of the party assembled in the chambers of Mr. Travis. We see what were his expectations, when he penetrated the dwelling—what and whom he expected to discover in the hall. He was somewhat surprised to find a stranger—not the rival whom he sought.

The stranger sat alone, poring over a pile of written papers. Inglehardt did not immediately distinguish who he was. Beheld at some distance—for the stranger was on the opposite side of the long dining-table—his features and person were not clearly discernible in the doubtful light of the half-darkened

apartment; but a single glance sufficed to show that he was not the person whom the intruder sought. He paused for a moment, apparently at a loss. His own presence did not seem to be suspected by the stranger, who appeared wholly absorbed by his papers. He sat calm and grave, noting, with a pencil, certain points in the manuscripts before him—all of which were now emptied out of the case which had contained them, when left by Travis;—with certain additions from the pockets of their present possessor, they made quite a pile upon the table.

The stranger was of noble appearance—tall of person, well formed, and of medium fullness and proportions, neither stout nor slender. His head was broad and lofty, cheeks firm, chin full, the jaws marked by breadth and significant of power. His eyes were large and dark, eager and searching. His mouth, well-defined, was habitually rigid of compression, giving an idea of decision, promptness, and great resolution;—tempered, however, by the frankness and ingenuousness of an ardent temperament, and a genius at once magnanimous and ambitious. His hair, combed back, powdered, and tied behind, in the absurd style common to the gentry of that period, contributed to the full development of his features, and, perhaps, somewhat tended to increase the general expression of sternness, almost of severity, which was the one most natural to his aspect. He was dressed in black, without uniform or ornament, in the fashion of the professional people of the time, with ruffles at wrist and bosom, and a rapier at his side. This weapon, however, as he sat at the table, was not perceptible to the intruder, who had every opportunity for examining him. The stranger was too much absorbed to note his presence, even to hear his footstep. His mind was full, his imagination busy, his brow clouded with thought.

After surveying him awhile in silence, the eye of Inglehardt gradually becoming reconciled to the imperfect light, he smiled with a grim satisfaction. He had been disappointed, seeking for his rival, to find a stranger, but that stranger was no common prey. Could he succeed in capturing *him*, his fortune was made. The British commandant could deny him nothing. And was he not in his hands?

Inglehardt advanced. The stranger looked up.

"Ha!—well! who are you, sir?"

The loyalist captain did not exactly answer the question, as he replied:—

"I know you, sir—you are John Rutledge, the rebel-governor of this colony! Sir, you are my prisoner!"

Rutledge laughed.

"Ha! indeed! my good sir, whoever you are, you are a blockhead. You neither know me—nor yourself. If you knew either of us, sir, you would know that *I* am not to be made prisoner by you!"

Inglehardt's cheek flushed. He could feel the sentiment of scorn. He, the son of the overseer and grazier, felt the sting of the sarcasm from the born gentleman. But Inglehardt was of wonderfully well-balanced temper. A sting never disquieted him, or deranged his purposes, however much he might feel it.

"Your politeness, sir, will hardly suffice for your safety. I am satisfied that you are the rebel Governor, Rutledge, and I have the honor to be Richard Inglehardt, a poor captain of loyal rangers. My duty to arrest you is fortunately seconded by my power. I do not wish to shed your blood. Will you yield quietly, sir, where you can not resist with safety?"

Rutledge rose, and with one hand proceeded to gather up his papers, his eye still fixed on that of the loyalist captain. The other drew a pistol from his pocket.

"Yield! you say? Yield!"

"Ay, sir, it is your only hope of safety. A single blast of this bugle fills the house with my rangers. They are even now collected in the court."

"Yield! why, my good fellow, do you not see that, as the rebel governor of this state, to yield to you is impossible! Were the whole army of Rawdon at hand I could not yield! Don't talk to me of yielding. John Rutledge a prisoner? no, no! Fall on, if it must be so! The gown against the sword for once. *Cedant armæ toga!* I take my auguries from the poet. He shall be *vates* for me in the present juncture."

"Your life shall be safe, sir," said Inglehardt, "but resistance is impossible. Once more, I warn you. Yield, sir, and be assured of good treatment."

"You have your answer!" said Rutledge, cocking his pistol, and keeping his eye steadily upon him.

"Your blood be upon your own head!" answered Inglehardt, raising the bugle to his lips. But, before he could wind it, Sinclair had thrown the coverlet, taken from Mrs. Travis's bed, over the head of the loyalist, enveloping head and shoulders completely; and so suddenly and closely was it drawn, as to prevent the shout with which he would have brought his troopers into the house. The next moment, spite of all his struggles, he was stretched out upon the floor, his head still muffled.

"A cord, Mrs. Travis," cried Sinclair to the lady who made her appearance at the door the next moment, and readily procured and provided the required article. With knee upon the breast of the loyalist, Sinclair slipped a knot about his arms and feet, which put him completely *hors-de-combat*, then lifting him up, as if he were an infant, he bore him into the passage, and thence down the inner steps into the basement, where he laid him out gently upon the floor.

Never was captive so easily overcome—so simply, so suddenly, and so unexpectedly to himself. The process was the only one. The muffling of the head was the only means of security. Could he have wound his bugle, or shouted, his troopers would have rushed into the house instantly, and a few moments only would have been required for the work of destruction. An ordinary enemy, obeying an impulse, would have knocked the loyalist down, or tried to do so; the ready wit of Sinclair found it better to roll him up. This was most effectually done, and the stifled cries of Inglehardt, with all his efforts, could not have been audible without the apartment.

Scarcely had our major of dragoons succeeded in this operation, and in conveying his captive to the basement, when he heard the cheering voice of Bertha Travis, above-stairs, warbling snatches of a popular song. He did not wait for more, but, darting upward to the dining-room, he found Rutledge with pistols ready, his papers put away in his bosom, and his rapier drawn.

"Up-stairs now, governor, up-stairs if you please, with Mrs. Travis, while I secure these doors as quietly as possible. We

need but twenty minutes of respite, and must peril nothing from stray shot or sudden stroke. We shall gather up all these rascals with a little patience."

Such were Sinclair's words—*commands*.

Rutledge tendered his hand to the lady, in the style of one of the courtiers of that day, and the two disappeared up-stairs. Sinclair at once threw the bars into the staples, which secured the entrances to the house, front and rear; then, as the enemy might enter the rooms at the windows from the piazzas, he locked the two doors, opposite each other, which opened into the passage, and hurried up-stairs also. Here, gliding to one of the windows he looked out into the court, taking care not to expose himself.

"Ay, there they are, awaiting the bugle blast of their captain! Well, they shall now have mine;" and with the words, our major of dragoons poured out a lively *tira-la tira-la*, thrice from his bugle. There was then a rush below to enter; and, failing to get in the door, some of the troopers were soon heard clambering in at the windows.

"It will cost them a few minutes," quoth Sinclair, "to break down the inner door, and by that time they will have to turn about for other customers. Ha! do you hear that?"

It was the distant blast of another bugle.

"In five minutes, St. Julien will be here! But they may give us work to do in that five minutes. Governor, with our pistols, we must watch the stairs."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE MELEE—A CHARGE—FLIGHT—CAPTIVITY.

PROMPT at the summons, Rutledge, then the dictator of South Carolina, to whom the state had intrusted the sovereign discretion implied in the words of his charter—to “see that the republic sustained no harm”—followed the major of dragoons to the post of danger with as little hesitation as the commonest foot-soldier might have shown. Here, the soldier was in command, and the sovereign was submissive. Both held themselves in readiness, and their pistols too, at the head of the stairway; while the troopers of Inglehardt were striving to force their entrance from the hall into the passage.

“An axe! Bring an axe!” was the shriek, rather than speech, of one of them, apparently in command below. Had either of the two above-stairs ever heard the voice of Inglehardt’s fierce little red-headed lieutenant, Fry, he would have been at no loss in identifying the speaker. Anon—was heard—

“Stand away! Let Crowell strike!”

And the blows resounded.

At this moment, Sinclair discovered Bertha at his elbow, pale, but firm, and apparently taking position in the ranks, as if in waiting for her share in the fray.

“Back!” cried he—“Back, dearest—you have no business here! Back to your chamber and keep wholly out of sight!”

The poor girl shrank away, thinking the speech the harshest she had ever heard, or expected to hear, from the lips of her lover. But it was no time for mammets. The tilt promised to be any sort but that of loving lips.

The blows resounded more and more heavily below; the splinters were heard to fly from the door; and, after a few more strokes, a rending crash, and a shout, announced the

success of the assailants. The door was shattered, driven from its hinges, and the troopers dashed into the passage. They darted forward—one, two, three!—headlong up the steps.

A shot!—the foremost is stricken down with a bullet through the head! He fell backward, balanced a moment, as it were, revolving in air, then yielded, and rolled over, down between the legs of his companions!

There was a pause—a check—a sensation. Thus suddenly to lose one man out of three or four is apt to cause uncomfortable feelings in the survivors.

“What! do you stop when a man misses a step? on with you! Don’t you see he’s only scared. Whoop! up, boys! There’s but a single man of them!”

So Fry!—and up the troopers bounded once more—two, three, four; Fry pressing behind them with sword and pistol.

“Up and down flew the bullets—a little wildly. Another falls. Sinclair himself is grazed. He darts down with his sabre; smites right and left, and hurls one fellow over the banister! The space between the parties reduced, his powerful size and strength, in that narrow passage, render him equal to half a score. Besides, he is on the elevation. He strikes downward, and this is an advantage. Fry, a brave little fellow, confronts him, and his arm, the right arm, drops, hewn clean off at the shoulder with a single sweep of the sabre.

“Oh, my God!” was his cry, “I’m ruined for life!” and he sank down, fainting, at the feet of his enemy, and rolled to the bottom of the steps.

But two men now confronted our major of dragoons—and they shrank—staggered back—down the stairs, and jostled each other, in the struggle, made with backward eyes, to regain the door of the passage—regain their comrades.

Shouts within, and shouts without, confounded their senses. Sinclair kept his ground, midway the stairflight. Rutledge had reloaded the emptied pistols. He himself had discharged a couple, and he now joined Sinclair with the ready weapons. The latter would not suffer him to remain at the position which he himself occupied.

“They are preparing for more deliberate operations,” said he—“but deliberation is their death! Do you not hear the

bugles?" Suddenly there is a wild clamor without—a shout—the merry and shrill clamor of the trumpets, and the heavy clangor of the charging horse.

Sinclair rushed up for a moment, and gave a hurried glance, through the half-opened window of one of the chambers, out upon the avenue and court. He beheld the *melée*—a glance was enough. He rushed down stairs, tore away the bar which secured the outer door, and, waving his broadsword aloft, darted out into the piazza, and down the steps—shouting, at the topmost pitch of his voice, as he came forth:—

"Hurrah! dragoons! over 'em! They are yours! Feed the sabre as they fly! Into them! Through 'em, my brave fellows! You are a match for fifty more such rascals!"

And well did the brave troopers second the encouragement of the major of dragoons, and deserve it! The squad of Inglehardt, taken wholly by surprise, was already scattered. Some darted into the woods below, others for the swamp. Their captain nowhere to be seen—their fierce little Ensign Fry, bleeding helplessly to death at the foot of the stairs in the dwelling—they were without a head, and the members were soon dispersed and broken; all but a group of ten or a dozen, who kept together, and dashed into the upper avenue, relying on their hoofs rather than their broadswords.

But the dragoons were soon upon their haunches. Sinclair himself was now mounted, having seized upon a vacant saddle—a steed that, in his fright and confusion—had actually thrust his nose into one of the basement windows of the house.

The poor beast—not a bad beast either—was that of Fry. Once astride this animal, the spurs of Sinclair soon brought him to the right-about; and he dashed forward with all his mettle, now quite recovered, in pursuit of his flying associates. These, hard pressed, wheeled about, and emptying their pistols full in the face of their pursuers, but without doing much mischief, they prepared for the encounter, *pell-mell*, with the slashing broadsword. Presenting a good force, they completely covered the narrow avenue in which they were overtaken.

"Charge!" cried Sinclair, with all the glad fury of the Hun, raging with battle. But, even in that moment, a voice as loud, and clearer than his own, thundered out, at his very side:—

"Spare them, Sinclair! Remember, they are our countrymen! Let them accept mercy—let them make submission! We will receive them into our ranks! Submit, brave fellows, it is better to live for your country, than to die for a foreign tyrant! Submit and save yourselves!"

It was the voice of Rutledge. He, too, had seized upon a vagrant steed, and was now riding by Sinclair's side—an emptied pistol in his hand, no hat upon his head, his arm waving wide, as was its wont when he thundered in speech—and his lofty person rising to the full majesty of the words which he had spoken.

And the words were as magical as majestic. The loyalists lowered their swords, and made the sign of submission, wheeled into the rear of Sinclair's troop, and became good rebels after a creditable fashion.

However strange the fact, the case was frequent. The wise policy of Rutledge brought back hundreds to the ranks of the country. He knew that the cause had not been well understood at first—that many were beguiled by false counsellors—than many had been driven by injustice into the ranks of the enemy, and that it needed only to take all such, at the happy moment, to persuade, convince, or—subsidize. The victory was won. All but seven or eight of Inglehardt's followers were to be counted upon the ground, or in captivity. The fugitives, dashing into the woods below, which it had been arranged that Coulter's troop was to cover, had thus far succeeded in making their escape. These were to be looked after at a future moment.

Sinclair and Rutledge, with the troopers, now rode back to the dwelling, where some time was spent necessarily in the inspection of the field, in removing the dead from the house, and purging it of its bloody testimonials. Here, it was found that the fierce little Lieutenant Fry, had bled to death; not an unfrequent event where such formidable wounds were given, and in a service which, like that of our partisans, was attended by but few surgeons. Fry was utterly lifeless when his body was examined, but it was still warm. Two others were found slain by pistol-shots—three lay severely wounded in the court, and one killed; seven were slightly wounded, and within the

succor of the simplest surgery, and only some half-dozen of the tory troop remained to be picked up or accounted for.

But where was their captain—where Inglehardt, who had been so securely corded, as it was thought, and muffled up in the passage of the basement? When they came to look for him, he was gone. He had evidently found assistance from other hands than his own, and had escaped. He was nowhere to be found. When, a little while after, the ladies were referred to, they knew nothing. They had heard noises below, but had not ventured from the upper chambers, till Sinclair's reappearance in the court below had reassured them; and even then they had not descended to the lower story.

But we have sources of information beyond theirs, by which to account for the escape of the captain of loyalists. He had a friend capable of succoring him, in one, who, though his creature, was about the last creature in the world to whom he should have looked for help in a moment of danger. But the mouse can gnaw through the meshes of the lion, and Inglehardt's mouser came to his aid at a happy moment.

It happened that, in the very moment when the conflict began, Julius, the mulatto house-servant of Travis, trembling with terror, had crept into one of the basement windows. Here, in one of the darkest places, he crouched in an ague fit, and remained unconscious of everything but the shouts, the shots, the clang of sabres, and the rush of steeds without, until the pursuit of the fugitives by our major of dragoons. Then, he recovered courage to look about him, but not yet to look *out*. He heard a difficult breathing in the passage—a rustling, restless motion—and a feeble voice, half-stifled, crying, at moments, for succor. It was some time before the mulatto dared approach the object of his apprehension, and ascertain the fact, that the prisoner, thus fettered, and half-smothered in the coverlet torn from the bed of his mistress, and wrapped tolerably snugly about his neck, and over his head, was the wily tory whom he had so profitlessly served in this very expedition. With trembling hands the mulatto cut the cords, tore off the bandage, and released the prisoner.

A glance at the field, taken stealthily through the windows, revealed to Inglehardt the whole plan of escape. The troopers

were in pursuit. The negroes had all fled to hiding-places. None but wounded, dying, or dead men were to be seen, and it was just possible to steal out, unnoticed, to the swamp. Thither, accordingly, he determined to fly; and he made the attempt in safety, taking Julius with him. He buried himself, as soon as possible, up to the neck, among the thick reeds and willows of the swamp.

Here, he could still, in some measure, be a witness of the scene. He could hear the shouts of victory, the tramlings of the horse, the blasts of the bugle, and then the regular trot of the troop as it passed into the woods below; and, finally, to his great relief, down came the darkening shadows of night over river and forest. Under her friendly shelter, Inglehardt stole out from his hiding-place, making for the river, and designing to swim across. But here he found the boat which Sinclair had employed in his passage to and fro. He gladly availed himself of the opportunity which it offered him, and, having made the boy Julius first enter, he leaped in himself, and allowed the little vessel to drop down stream. The navigation was not intricate, and he knew it well; and when he reached the mouth of Four-mile Branch, he ran the dug-out in, pressed upward as far as the waters would allow, and then put his little vessel in a place of concealment near the banks, closely covered with a matted thicket.

Here he felt himself tolerably safe. It was now quite dark, though the night was clear and starlighted. He was now, he knew, within half a mile of the *bay* thicket, whither he had ordered Travis to be taken, and where he was to be kept, until he should return from his enterprise against Sinclair at Holly-Dale. He never anticipated his own return in his present condition; but, with usual and proper precaution, the same *bay* had been appointed as the place of *rendezvous* for his troopers in case they should be scattered in pursuit or flight. He could soon reach this point, and everything was silent. That he did not immediately attempt it was due to his exhaustion. He was sore from his recent bonds, and wearied, not to speak of a temporary depression of spirits that was quite natural to his reverses. Once he thought of sounding his bugle, which was still about his neck, but he prudently recollected that its summons

might bring down upon him far other visiters than those whom he cared to entertain at present. He concluded to keep snugly in his canoe for an hour, and then venture out to the place of rendezvous. His present place of refuge was favorable to any movement which he might desire to make, enabling him to steal back again to Holly-Dale, should he see fit—and this was to depend wholly upon the number of fugitives which should join him at the *bay*—to return to Orangeburg, should the conquering troop of Sinclair not take the same direction; to put himself across the river, or go still farther down the stream, should the exigency of the case render it necessary that he should increase the distance between himself and his enemy. Inglehardt could meditate his plans coolly still, in spite of his mortifications of flesh and spirit—in spite of the defeat of his objects, and the loss, now felt for the first time, of his pistols, sword and snuff-box. His nose—and it felt the privation—was unfed during the whole of his meditation.

Leaving him to brood above his paddles, and in waiting upon Fate, we return to Holly-Dale.

While Inglehardt had thus been stealing off in security, Sinclair had been busily engaged in reaping the field which he had won, and arranging his plan of future operations. Much had to be done, occupying considerable time, before he could rejoin the ladies. Rutledge required him in consultation, and there was something to be understood in regard to the troop with which the victory had been obtained, which taxed his consideration. This troop was not that of Coulter; was, in fact, only a detachment from that of Captain St. Julien, under the command of Lieutenant Mazyck. St. Julien had been compelled to go, with one half of his force, in pursuit of a mixed body of tories and *black dragoons* (negroes), which had been reported as breaking cover somewhere on the South Edisto; and thither had Coulter also gone with his company, before the summons of Sinclair could reach him. Mazyck, accordingly, had brought with him but twenty-five troopers; but, when we add to these, some thirteen of Inglehardt's squad—raw fellows, but docile, who had accepted Rutledge's offer of pardon for past offences—the thirty-eight, all told, made a body sufficiently strong for present purposes.

Jim Ballou had also come back, from his fruitless search after Coulter, and 'Bram, the negro, had reached the field in season to dash in, after his master, and make his demonstrations in the fight, when it promised to be fiercest. Under Sinclair's eye, and seconding his charge, 'Bram had already shown that he could be a fearful customer. He had some scruples about the prudence and propriety of warfare, unless some dashing cavalier of the white race put himself in the van of battle.

Having seen to his troopers, and ascertained the facts in his situation, Sinclair prepared, accompanied by Rutledge, to revisit the ladies, and relieve their anxieties. They re-entered the house together, and while the dictator remained in the parlor below, our major of dragoons ascended the stairs. He was met midway by Bertha, whom he caught with a loving fierceness in his arms, pressing her lips with his own, before she could apprehend his purpose, and extricate herself from his grasp.

"All's safe, Bertha. We are the masters of the field."

"Is all safe?" answered the girl, with anxiety and trembling—"Is all safe, Willie? Where's Henry, my brother?"

"Henry, your brother!" exclaimed Sinclair, staggered by the question, and at once reproaching himself for his seeming forgetfulness of the noble boy.

"Is he not here? Has he not been with you?"

"No! no! Good Heavens, Willie, what is become of him? Have you not seen him?"

Yes, to be sure; I saw him when I rode out to charge the enemy up the avenue. I saw him, then, and heard him shouting, and thought he followed me, but, in the excitement of the charge, I lost him; and on my return, seeing no more of him, I concluded he had joined his mother and yourself."

"Oh, Willie! this is terrible! What can have become of him? Go, dear Willie, go seek and find him, and come back soon with him, for mother is in a wretched state of uneasiness. Hasten, Willie, while I go back and quiet her, with a hope that you will find and bring him soon."

Sinclair at once dashed down the stairs, and, in a few words, told Rutledge his new cause of anxiety, in which the sympathies of the latter were deeply interested.

"But *I* must go, Sinclair, you are aware—go at once; I am expected, and hope to meet General Greene to-night. Too much depends upon mere moments now, to suffer me to delay, even though to help in the search for this gallant boy."

"I know it, sir; and, if you please, will despatch an escort of ten men with you, under Lieutenant Mazyck, who will accompany you across the river, crossing at Shilling's, which is the shortest rout to Herrisperger's, and going on with you to the meeting with General Greene, if you require it."

"No! no! that will not be necessary. I have my two aids waiting for me at Herrisperger's and they will suffice for escort. The road is pretty clear now. We know where Rawdon is on the Congaree, and that Greene's detachment is even now in advance of him. All's safe along my route, and I will send your man back as soon as I reach Herrisperger's. You, meanwhile, see after the boy, and join the army with all despatch. We have active work for all our cavalry below."

"Touching Captain Travis, governor, and his petition?"

"It is granted. Here is the document which gives him indemnity. His papers are valuable to us, and I do not question his fidelity in future. His danger is now from the enemy. His absence suggests the fear that Inglehardt has found him out, and secured him in Orangeburg. Now is the time to dash into the village, empty the jail, where they are said to have some score or two of refractory Irish in limbo, and where Travis is probably laid by the heels also. Be sure, while you are about this business, to secure what remains of the commissariat in Orangeburg. Get all the clothes and munitions that you can; and, by loading your troopers well, and moving promptly up the river, you will be able to join us, before Rawdon can possibly make his way across the country. You will probably find the Irish, whom you emancipate, willing to take arms against their former owners. If so, mount them, and bring them along behind your troopers. Of course, you will search for the boy; but beware that you do not linger one hour too long. You must give up the search, if it delays you over the next twenty-four hours. However painful it may be to you, in your relations with this very interesting family, to forego the search, you are neither to peril your troop, nor embarrass our purposes in any fruitless

waste of time. If the boy is slain, which God forbid! you will find his body, no doubt, in yonder wood. If the fugitives have borne him along with them, they will hardly ill-treat such a child—indeed, will hardly think it worth while to detain him.”

“Ah! sir, you know not this cold-blooded scoundrel Inglehardt, or his objects. The father and son in his power, he will hope to establish a fearful hold upon the family.”

“But *he* is a fugitive, also.”

“He has escaped, and flies, it is true; but he has probably caught the boy in his flight; and, while we were pressing upon the enemy up the avenue, has succeeded in carrying him off. The father’s wealth, the daughter’s beauty, are both objects of greedy desire with Inglehardt; and father and son in his power, how terrible is the hold which he possesses upon the mother and daughter!”

Sinclair readily conceived the policy of his enemy, from a knowledge of his character.

“It is a cruel prospect to survey, but, I trust, that you exaggerate its dangers. As a fugitive, and pressed by your troopers, Inglehardt’s flight must be one of embarrassments, which will probably compel him to cast off his prisoners, assuming that he has them.”

“He may brain them first,” said Sinclair, with a shudder.

“Hardly, if his purpose be such as you indicate. No! no! my dear fellow, look at the thing more cheerfully. Press the pursuit; urge the hunt and search; be prompt and keen; be quick; do not lose time; and, if you fail to find the boy and his father, at least, your failure will be temporary. My life upon it, Inglehardt will harm neither. His policy demands that he should not.”

“But should he give Travis up to Balfour or Rawdon, they will hang him.”

“He will hardly do that either, unless he finds his schemes have been defeated. No! no! shake off your gloom, and go to your duty. Send out your scouts at once, and scour all the woods down to Orangeburg. Let us both away on our separate duties at once. Let me have your escort. The night is upon us.”

And the two parted, going several ways; Rutledge, with

Mazyck and his escort upward, and Sinclair with all but two troopers, left to watch Holly-Dale, burying himself in the lower woods, where, under direction of Ballou, the scout, some of the men carrying torches, the whole command was so scattered as to cover the width of the wood from the edge of the swamp to the main road. Thus displayed, the troopers pushed down in equal line, with regular pressure, and as rapidly as they might consistently with their purpose of close search along the route. The lower swamp itself could not be penetrated on horseback, or searched successfully by night, and Sinclair shook his head sadly as he thought that the poor boy might, even then, be held down, and half stifled, not a hundred yards distant, in some one of its deep recesses.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HOW HENRY TRAVIS FARED IN HIS FIRST BATTLE.

As a matter of course, before the attempt to search the woods was begun, a thorough inquiry was made among the troopers, and a search of the grounds immediately about the house instituted, in order, if possible, to find some clues to the fate of the boy. But no information was obtained which could be relied on, or which was in any way valuable. He had been seen by several persons, but only for a moment; and when the excitement of the conflict was such that each had his own cause of anxiety, his own work on hand, and when one impression instantly dispersed all traces of the preceding. His boyish eagerness had been noted, his boyish shouts were remembered. But it was surprising how completely he had been lost sight of by everybody, in the moment when Sinclair himself lost sight of him;—the moment when the latter charged up the northwest avenue, in the final assault upon the only party of the loyalists who still showed an embodied front. We have seen the fortunate result of this charge, and need say no more on the subject. When Sinclair first heard from Bertha that Henry had not appeared, a full hour had elapsed after the strife was over—this time being consumed in collecting the prisoners, attending to the wounded, and making such dispositions as were called for by the safety of the party, and in the consultation with Rutledge.

Feeling some natural self-reproaches for his momentary forgetfulness of one so really dear to him as Henry Travis, and now greatly anxious for his fate, Sinclair hastened his proceedings for the search, and having made such arrangements as would tend to the better prosecution of his attempts, he soon disappeared with his command, meaning himself to lead the

hunt, at all events until the party reached Four-Mile creek ; when it was his purpose, whether successful or not, to press down with the larger body of his men, by a rapid movement upon Orangeburg, fulfilling the objects indicated in his conference with Rutledge. The further search after the boy, if he was not recovered before reaching that point, was to be left to Ballou and 'Bram, with half a dozen of the best scouts from among the dragoons. Nothing more could then be thought of.

Leaving our major of dragoons to this labor, we return to the field, and resume our narrative of the struggle.

It is for us to supply the deficient knowledge, which now prompted the search of Sinclair ; and to show by what processes our young friend, Harry Travis, disappeared from the scene of action. We have the evidence of his presence upon the field. He came down with the rest, in the rapid charge of Mazyck, which surprised the loyalists, at the moment when Lieutenant Fry, and three or four of his followers were breaking into the house. Those without, sitting their horses carelessly, or dismounted and strolling about the grounds, were taken wholly by surprise when the dragoons charged ; and being raw recruits mostly, and totally lacking the coolness and steadiness of old soldiers, dispersion followed, except in the small group of ten or a dozen, who, wheeling around the house, dashed up the avenue, the only opening, which promised them an unobstructed course for flight. The rest, whether on horse or a-foot, darted at once for shelter into the lower woods, or scattered themselves about the grounds, to be run down, and knocked severally on the head by Mazyck's troopers, some of whom very naturally addressed themselves to these performances.

Henry Travis, pistols in hand, found himself thus engaged, along with the rest, almost without a thought. He had heard the shout of Sinclair, and his own had answered it with an exulting sense of joyousness ; but the major, at that moment, was on one side of the house, he on the other ; Sinclair was dragging forth the horse of Fry, preparing to charge the only compact force of the enemy which still kept the field. Henry did not see him—did not know of the party which had swept up the avenue. His eyes were sufficiently occupied with the fugitive

figures, on horse or afoot, that were to be seen scattering in search of cover; and he was led away, by a natural impulse, which effectually rendered him heedless of any objects, but the one actually before his eyes.

Now, it will be remembered, that Inglehardt had left Dick of Tophet and Brunson the Trailer, in cover behind the dairy, commissioned with the special duty of securing the person of Bertha Travis, and making off with her to the swamp, irrespective of any of the proceedings of himself and his troopers. This was one grand feature of his meditated performances that day, the next in importance to the one task which he assigned to himself, of capturing or destroying Sinclair. We have seen the fruits of his mistake, in supposing that Sinclair was the only guest at Holly-Dale.

Dick of Tophet and the Trailer were duly impressed with the importance of the duty confided to their hands, by the promise of ten guineas—an immense sum in those days—to be divided between them, in the event of the girl's captivity, and her safe delivery, in the swamp, into the hands of their employer. *He* had his reasons for not undertaking her seizure at the house in person. His emissaries were instructed that they were to confine themselves wholly to the one object, and not to take part in any other performances of the troopers. The rest of the duties of the day, Inglehardt reserved wholly to himself, and his lieutenant, Fry, and entertained no misgivings—as why should he?—of the perfect adequacy, for his objects, of all his arrangements.

Dick of Tophet and the Trailer, accordingly, having fastened their horses, along with that of their captain, in a close patch of the wood, some fifty or sixty yards south of the settlement, had taken their places of watch in the rear of the dairy. Here they were conveniently situated for covering the garden, the kitchen, and, by a sudden dash, compassing the open ground between these points and the dwelling. But their position did not suffice to take in any of the grounds *above*, either in the north or west. On foot, and sheltered by woods or fences, they could see nothing of the upper avenue. But they could hear, and were soon apprized by the blast of the bugle, which they supposed to be Inglehardt's, and by the

strokes of the axe upon the inner doors of the dwelling, that there was some resistance to be overcome, the character of which they could only conjecture. They concluded that Sinclair, taken in the toils, had barricaded himself in one of the chambers, and that Inglehardt was forcing his way in. Their next conclusion was, that, so soon as the strife should be begun in the house, the females would be forced to leave it, and to fly, either to the kitchen or the woods. They were to keep themselves ready for this event and moment. To do this, they stole into the garden, tearing off the palings sufficiently to obtain entrance, and passing up, under shelter of the fence all the while, to that corner of it which stood nearest to the dwelling. Here, they might have penetrated into the court, by simply opening the gate of the garden; but any premature exhibition of their persons might only have defeated their objects; and they finally crept forward from this point to one of the angles of the garden, which led obliquely to the lower or southern avenue. Here the woods approached very closely to the garden. The thicket of oakwoods, sprinkled with pines, was of some density; and it was from this point that Inglehardt's troopers had gradually pressed forward into the open area about the dwelling. The employment of Fry, within the house—the noise of his axe, naturally acting upon their anxieties, had led them forward, and they were grouped carelessly but curiously about the dwelling, on that side chiefly, from which Fry and his followers had forced their way into the windows. There was no enemy to be seen, and, in such cases, raw recruits are apt to think that none is to be feared. So completely, indeed, did the place seem to be in the hands of Inglehardt—so entirely at his mercy—that its situation appealed to the cupidity, even against caution, of such old soldiers as Dick of Tophet and the Trailer. The former as he looked out and listened—noting the eager but careless groups in the foreground, exclaimed to his companion:—

“Gimini! Gimini! Rafe! there's nice pickings to be had in that establishment; and we might ax sensibly, who's to git 'em?”

“I reckon; but I don't think that the cappin is a-guine to let any of us hev' a hack at it; he'll be for keeping it all to himself.”

“I reckon he'll not be able to help it, ef the thing once be-

gins, and we kin only git a little Jamaica to set the boys fairly a-fire. I say, Rafe, one of us is enough to take this gal off in safety, and t'other kin work for both in picking up the little gould and silver things that's apt to be lying about, jest ready for the hands, when a family's a leetle in fright and confusion. The cappin needn't know but that we brought off the gal together. Eh? What do you say? S'pose you takes the gal affair upon your hands, while I see to the pickings about the place, and we'll share honest what we gits together?"

"Ah! Dick, don't I know what sort o' share is guine to come to me? Don't I know you too well? You ain't a-guine to let me see or smell a quarter of the things you picks up."

"Who the h—l says I ain't honest? Look you, Rafe Brunson, it's not the part of an old friend to make sich insinivations! A man's charakter for fair dealing with his friends, when the business is pickings and putting away, is more precious than any gould and silver; and I'll hev' my fingers in the hair of any pusson, in mighty short order, that says I takes more than my rightful share in the incomings of our right honorable profession?"

"Well, don't be putting your fingers into my wool, Dick, till I gives you occasion. But jest say now, up and down, you'll give us *hafe* of what you picks up Dick?"

"Hafe! I didn't say that! But I'll give a *rightful* share to the man that's my partner in the business. *Hafe's* another thing. It don't stand to reason that he should hev' a full hafe; bekaise him that takes all the risk, hes a right to all, 'cept what he chooses to think the other one desarves. Now, you know that I'm always for the most resk, and I don't vally pistol-shot or sabre-cut, when it's all that stands a'tween me and a pretty pickings. But you does. You don't go into a skrimmage with a whole heart. You're best for trailing and scouting, and I'm best for fighting; and we shares accordin to a man's natur, and what his desarvings calls for. Don't I know that when that house is a gutting, I'll be called upon to draw knife on some of them troopers? Don't you see that I'll hev to fight, hand to hand, with the Lord knows who or how many—prehaps a dozen! And don't you see that I kain't stand to see one of them chuckleheads carrying off a fine gould watch, or a great silver basin, or a heavy silver cup, or any precious fine thing

that he don't know the vally of, when small chores would answer just as well for him; and ef he's obstropulous, and won't let me manage for him, don't you see, I'll hev' to slip a knife into his windbag? Now that's the work that you don't love to do, and that's the very work I'm best up to; and it's hard work, too; and its mighty dangerous work, Rafe; and it makes a man so sorry when he has to do it to one of our own people. No! it stands to reason that the man what takes sich hard work, and mighty resks on himself, has a rightful share to jist what he pleases; and has the right to give his partner, jist only what's proper to his small services. Now, you see, this job of carrying off the gal, I shares that equal with you. 'Tain't much to be done, you see. Thar's no fighting, only jest quick catching and close watching. Well, I got the job, and that's about the hardest part of it. Well, you takes the gal off, and we shares equal them ten guineas; and I look to the pickings of the house, and I shares with you *handsome*, 'cordin' to my notions. And that's what I thinks honest dealings with a partner. But I'll make you say it's honest. Look you, you take the gal, and you shill hev' six out of the ten guineas. Thar! that's what I calls handsome. After that, there's no saying till we sees' the pickings, what I shill give you from the guttings of the house."

The Trailer answered this excessive liberality of his associate with a ghastly grin.

"It's jist like all your dealings, Dick: jist sich a bargain as the fox drives when he goes a hunting with the cat. But we'll see. I reckon I kin manage the gal easy enough, and I confess you air best for a skrimmage, and for finding out where the good pickings air."

The superior will of the ruffian, as usual, coerced his companion into submission.

"Well, now, Rafe, that being fixed and onderstood between us, 'twill be jest right now to get ready to make a spring. I don't want any of them lanksided troopers to be much ahead of me. It's well, prehaps, whar thar's any chainece of a skrimmage, to send one or two of 'em ahead jist to draw the bullets of the inimy; but I reckon thar's no bullets hyar to be drawn, except Sinclair's, and the cappin is more in the way of his, jist

now, than anybody else; and all the scuffle a'tween them will be over afore we need to put in. So jist you follow me out through this paling. We'll jist get on the outside, easy to the house, and easy to the woods. Whenever I goes into a gentleman's parlor, I likes to keep the door open behind me. Thar now, a dozen steps, and I gits to the house; hyar now, at my back, is the woods; and, yonder, about a hundred yards, is the horses. You see?"

"All right, I reckon! It's a good place I think for ossevation."

"Good; it's the only place! Here we're ready for jest anything what happens. But they're mighty slow. Hah! what's that? a shot! two shots! Willie Sinclair's giving the fellows his lead! But pistols can't do much in any man's hands with hafe a dozen fellows on him."

"There goes another—bang!"

"And another! and thar's a bugle blast."

"That's not for us! Hello! what's the trouble now? what's them horses we hears? It's a troop!"

"A rush, by jingoes! A troop of dragoons at full speed, down the avenue. Gimini! they're St. Julien's men. Hell and blisters! won't these fellows catch it! Whar's the cappin? whar's Fry? whar's anybody, to hold up these fellows and make 'em face about handsome! Grim! I must bring 'em about, square up to the music, or they'll be smashed to pieces in a twinkle."

And Dick of Tophet drew his sabre, and was rushing out to the area, where the loyalists were beginning confusedly to show their consciousness of the new danger, when the Trailer caught his arm, and dragged him back into cover.

"What air you about, Dick?"

"Don't you see?" pulling away from his companion. "These chaps will be smashed eternally to pieces, and nobody to show 'em what to do!"

"And kin you help 'em—kin anybody help 'em now? Don't you see the broadsword is writ on every one of their necks. They're cotch'd napping, on their haunches, and will never make a rise. Thar the fellows come with a whoop!"

"Thunder and smoke! I kain't look at it, and do nothing!" and Dick of Tophet, as he spoke, would have broken away

from the grasp of the Trailer, but that the other held on firmly, and drew him further back into the thicket, in spite of his struggles.

"You're a fool, after all, Joel Andrews! You kain't do no good. You kain't save them fellows! They're gone! Thar! don't you see! They're melted fairly under the rush. Half a dozen saddles emptied, and the rest scudding round the house with the dragoons after them! Hark! thar's another rush! Hafe of them dashing up the avenue!"

"And the dragoons after them! Who's that? Thunder! It's Willie Sinclair, himself, as I'm a born sinner! He's in the saddle! Whar kin the cappin be? Whar's Inglehardt? None thar but Sinclair! Thar! you hear him shouting! Now, whar's the fellow, in all that squad, to face about and taste his broadsword? Oh! ef I only had a good ducking gun to draw sight on him now, with fifteen pelters in the barrel!"

"Don't stop to talk, Dick. The time for us is gone. No pickings at that house to-day! Back! they'll see you! Look at them scattered fellows. They're making for the woods hyar, and will bring the dragoons upon us. Now's the time to snake away to the horses. Thar's no chainece, ef we stay. These fellows kain't hold up; they're too raw; they don't know now but that thar heads air all off. In! to the thicket, Dick, or you're a gone coon! The troopers air a-coming,"

And, seizing upon the arm of his reluctant companion, whose hope of pickings at Holly-Dale, was, for the present, effectually extinguished by this unexpected visitation, he drew him along with him into cover, both pushing on beside the rear of the garden fence, and toward the thicket behind the dairy where their horses had been fastened.

Dick of Tophet groaned as he went: "Sich a fine chainece cut up by these bloody rascals! Oh! gimini! thar's no honest chainces left for a poor fellow in the world!"

"Don't stop to grunt! You hear. They're a-coming."

The fugitives were dashing, pell-mell, into the woods below, the cover of the swamp affording them the best prospect of refuge. The policy of the Trailer was to keep aloof from their course: "Keep up above a bit—these runaway rascals will bring the dragoons upon us."

"Not too high! Thar's the thick where the nags are fastened."

"Yes, but let us stretch up a *leettle* and work round it. It's too open hyar to strike right straight."

"They're a coming this way! Hark!"

"It's but one horse, I'm a thinking."

"It's one of our people, perhaps."

"No! it's a blasted boy! He sees us! The kitten! He's a whooping at us! Ha! a pistol-shot! Pop! another! A tree! a tree, Rafe!"

And, verily, the young trooper, for whom Dick of Tophet and his companion now prepared themselves, was no other than our missing boy, Henry Travis. His quick eye had detected the two outlaws, at the very moment when they skulked out of the foreground, making into the upper woods; while the fugitives generally struck for the lower thickets, which led directly to the swamp. While the dragoons dashed after the latter, Henry, without ever pausing to ask if he was followed, or accompanied, started off, in a smart canter, in pursuit of the two. Shouting to them to halt and yield, he emptied his pistols as he rode—ineffectually—while Devil Dick and the Trailer, separating, dodged behind several trees, but within supporting distance of each other.

"The barking puppy. Surrinder to sich as *him*!" muttered Dick of Tophet. Then, as the boy came dashing on, he sprang out from his tree, caught the bridle of the steed in his grasp, and wheeled the animal right about, backing him among the bushes. Henry boldly hurled his pistol at his head; but this, though well-aimed, the assailant dodged with great dexterity; already had the boy lifted the other pistol, resolutely intending not again to miss, when a blow from the Trailer behind, knocked him from his horse, and covered one side of his face with blood. When the youth became fully conscious, after this stunning blow, it was because of the smart motion of the horse which bore him, closely grasped in the arms of his captor, and moving rapidly through an open pine thicket, which his dulled faculties—for he was still in a state of stupor from the blow—failed to recognise as a tract belonging to his father's plantation.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE SORE STRAIT—THE HOT TRAIL—CAPTIVITY.

THE cool, sturdy, experienced habits of Dick of Tophet and his companion, the Trailer, enabled them to make off successfully, carrying with them not only their own, but the horses of their captain, and that of Henry Travis. These two horses were led by the Trailer, while Dick bore away their captive, as we have seen, upon his own steed. They moved off with sufficient deliberation, in a walk at first, so that no unnecessary clatter should reach the ears of any hostile party—took a circuitous course, which carried them almost within sight of the main road, upon which, however, they were careful not to show themselves; and, having reached a point sufficiently remote, they started off in a smart canter, wherever the thickets would allow of it, rounding gradually down, toward the swamp, and in the direction of the bay, where it had been arranged that the whole party should rendezvous. In this progress they were totally unpursued. The natural direction taken by fugitives and pursuers alike, was toward the swamp recesses. The sagacity of the old troopers assured them that such would be the probable course of both parties, and their senses confirmed the conjecture. But for this, and had Sinclair, the moment his victory was made sure, turned into the woods with his whole troop, there is little doubt that the outlaws would have been compelled to abandon their prisoner, in order to effect their own escape, and even then they would scarce have succeeded in the latter object. There is a farther probability, however, that, forced to release their captive, they would first have brained him. Neither of them was much inclined to burden himself with prisoners, and, but for the selfish speculations of the least merciful of the two, our young volunteer would have found his first field his last. Brunson, the Trailer, was for despatching

him, in the very moment when he knocked him off his horse; but Dick of Tophet resisted.

"No! no! Rafe; the lad's worth his weight in gould to us, I reckon."

"I don't see how. Your gould speckilations, Dick, don't turn out so well in the eend as you says at the beginning. Ef we're to carry that lark along with us, the chaine is that we'll hardly git off with whole bones ourselves."

"Oh! I reckon we shill. You see the chaise takes down for the swamp. Nobody seed us slipping off up here, but this young cocksparrow, and it warn't lucky for him that he did. Hyar, now, gi's a hand, and sling him up to my crupper. I'll take him easy enough tell he kin raise his own head. It's a heavy clip you've gi'n him."

"I reckon the skull's cracked," was the reply, as they raised the boy across the saddle. "Ef so, thar's no great use in toting him. Better throw him off, and let's put him out of his pain."

"Grim! no! I tell you thar's gould to come out of that boy's hide. The cappin will pay for his carkiss, dead or alive; and, ef he gits over that crack of yourn, his dad's able to pay smartly. He's as rich as a Jew."

"He's not a-breathing, Dick."

"Yes! It's only a swound he's in. I reckon such a lick over your head or mine, would have put us in a swound too. Bear up. Thar! that will do. Now mount yourself and bring on the horses. We must push for the bay."

"But you don't reckon to find anybody thar! And whar's the cappin all this time?"

"I reckon he's fast lock'd up in the arms of keptivity. But we kin buy him out, with this boy and his dad. Push on now, and recollect you've got to pick him up. Ef nobody comes to the rendezvous by midnight, we must git across the river somehow, and that too without going down to the village. I reckon that'll be the place where Willie Sinclair will be pushing, as soon as he gits his troopers all in hand after this chase. It'll be no place for us. We must git across the river without going down to the village, even ef we has to swim the horses."

"And I wonder how you're to carry Cappin Travis and this chap across, on swimming horses?"

"Whar thar's a will thar's a way, Rafe! But we must sarch for a dugout. I reckon I kin find one in and about Four-Mile creek. At the worst, we kin leave the prisoners behind, ef we find that we're pressed too hard."

And, thus communing, they rode—the powerful arms of Dick of Tophet sustaining the still insensible boy, slung like a dead body across his saddle, and Brunson following as close as he could with the two led horses. All this while, the troopers of Sinclair were fruitlessly pressing down into the swamp fastnesses after the half dozen fugitives, who had sought refuge there. And this search was the loss of a great deal of precious time. Joel Andrews and his comrade, with their captive, had reached the bay where the boy's father had been fettered, long before the lights began to gleam in the distant woods, from the torches of Sinclair's troop, now all on the trail, beating the woods from the main road to the edge of the swamp, in search of the missing boy.

Before our fugitives reached this point, Henry Travis began to recover. His groans, followed by a struggle to raise himself upon the saddle, apprized Dick of Tophet of his returning life and senses.

"He'll do!" he muttered. "Well, my lad, what do you want?"

"Lift me up," said the boy.

"Well, I reckon it'll be easier to both of us if you do set upon your own haunches a little."

And he stopped his horse, and gave the boy the necessary assistance, which raised him upon the saddle, sitting with both legs upon the same side of the horse, after the fashion of female equestrians.

"Thar you are, my little kurnel; and, now, how do you feel?"

"Feel?"

"Ay! that's what I axes. How do you feel? Hev' you got any aches and pains in preticklar? A leetle sore about the head, I reckon, and a leetle stiffish in the j'int's. You ain't been a-riding jest as you've been used to ride, I reckon."

"My head! my head!" murmured the boy.

"I reckon it's a leetle oneasy. It's an onnateral headache

you've got, cotch'd from a graze agin the butteend of a pistol. You see, my leetle cocksparrow, if such young birds as you will go into a skrimmage, it's but nateral you should catch some sore throats and sore heads, and sore shins, and be sore for a long spell a'ter it. But, you'll be better by to-morrow. A leetle pine-gum plaister on that head of yourn will stop up the sore places."

The boy murmured :—

"Won't you let me down? I must go to mother."

"No! no! Your mammy don't want to see you tell you gits better; but I'll carry you to your daddy. He's a-waiting for you now."

The boy was silent—not so much because he was satisfied with this assurance, but really in consequence of returning stupor. But he still kept erect upon the saddle, the arm of his captor circling him with its great muscles, and the horse pressing forward now at a canter. Henry saw that he was going through a pine-forest, with no great undergrowth, but his senses were quite too much dulled for observation. When the party approached the bay, Dick of Tophet said to his companion :—

"You kin stop and see after the prisoner. I'll push down toward the creek. We must keep the two sep'rate jest now. When you hears my horn, bring your coon down to the creek as well as you kin. You kin loose his legs and make him walk it, at the p'int of the bagnet. He may need a stick or two, of your knife, to make him sensible which road he's to take."

Dick rode on half a mile farther, and was within a hundred yards of the creek, when he heard a whistle which he answered. Suddenly, a man emerged from the thicket.

"What's ripe?" demanded the trooper.

"Corn in mutton!" was the answer, in the deliberate tones of Inglehardt.

"Gimini! You—your own self, cappin? Why, how did you git off and git here so soon?"

A few words sufficed for answer.

"Who have you got here?"

"A prisoner! The young cub of the old wolf. Jest no other pusson than Travis's son."

"Ha! ha! father and son—eh? Well, they may bring the daughter yet. Bring the boy down to the creek—put him at once into the dugout, and take him across the river. Rope him and leave him there. Bring back the boat as soon as possible. It will take us three trips to get the party over."

But Henry Travis, now on his legs, resisted the tender entreaties of Dick of Tophet.

"Let me go. I'm no prisoner. Isn't that Captain Inglehardt?"

He had distinguished the voice of the latter, though he had failed to discover more than the outline of his person. Inglehardt walked away taking no notice of the speech.

"No matter who it is, my lark, as for being a prisoner, who says you is? You're only a young gentleman on a visit to his friends, whom they're a taking care of. That's the how: so come along with me, and don't be giving us the trouble to pick you up roughly to lay you straight."

And he laid hands on the boy to haul him forward. But the gallant lad jerked himself free, wheeled about, and having no weapon but his fist, planted a blow in the breast of the other, which was quite creditable, for aim as well as force, to so young a bruiser.

"Ha! you're at that, air you," answered the ruffian, returning the blow as he spoke, and felling the poor boy as if under the weight of a sledge-hammer.

"Don't hurt him, if you can help it," said Inglehardt returning for a moment. "But don't let him escape you."

"That he won't; but the young cock's game. Ef ever he lives to git his spurs he'll rash somebody's sides yit."

Thus speaking, he lifted up the boy and carrying him without seeming effort to the creek, laid him down in the bottom of the dugout, which he at once pushed away from the shore. Seizing upon one paddle, while the negro boy Julius plied the other, he was not long in making his way to the main stream, and still less time getting across. Here, having taken out his captive, he corded his arms and feet securely, and left him, under cover, upon the opposite banks. He then put back with all speed for the creek, and arrived just at the moment when the Trailer had brought down the four horses to the water.

"Why didn't you bring the prisoner, and leave the horses to the last?" demanded Inglehardt.

"He's right, cappin. We've got the boy, and that's something even if we lose the daddy. As for the horses, we kin never do without them, wherever we go, and there's no telling whar to git others, ef we lose these. We must put them over at once."

Two horses swimming beside the canoe, were all that the boy Julius could manage. Two trips were required accordingly for the transfer of the beasts to the opposite side. This consumed no little time, and was not a little wearisome to our Dick of Tophet, strong man as he was. When he recrossed a third time to his superior, he found the loyalist captain not a little anxious for his coming.

"You were long that trip, Dick, very long."

"Yes, indeed, and ef I hev' much more of sich work to do to-night, I'll git longer and longer, untell I snap right off in the middle."

"Don't talk of breaking down yet, my good fellow. That will do when we are all quite safe on t'other side. The Trailer's slow. What can keep him."

"Well, I reckon he's pretty well wore out like myself, and I spose old Travis won't do nothing for himself, and the Trailer 'll hev' to prick him along with the small eend of a knife, as I tell'd him. We hain't got much time to lose, that's mighty sartin."

Inglehardt strode up and down with a degree of impatience, clearly expressed; which was a very unusual exhibition with him. He had need to be anxious. By this time the signs and sounds of pursuit were to be heard from above. A mile ahead, the gleam of torches was to be seen, fitfully crossing through the woods. The hunt was up. The hunters were approaching. They could even hear the distant tread of the horse, and now and then a shout from the distant troopers announced some discovery.

Yet, the Trailer had not brought down *his* prisoner from the bay. Inglehardt was impatient.

"They will be upon us before we can get him off. By heavens! I hear dogs. Do you not? If there are dogs, we are lost."

Devil Dick stooped to listen.

"I don't hear the dogs. I reckon they've got none. Ef they hed they'd ha' been down upon us long before. They never would have kept the straight track down through the woods when we never come that way. No! I don't reckon they've got dogs. But they're a coming on jist as fast as ef they had. 'Twouldn't do to push up and see after the Trailer now, for I see a light that kain't be fur from the bay, and thar's no saying how many are a stalking softly in the darkness jest between where them lights are a-scattered."

"No! we must take no such risk. D—n the fellow, what can he be about?"

"Aix him! He's a born fool for anything but scouting. That he kin do prime. I wonder whar's his sense to waste time upon a prisoner. He had only to slit his throat and make tracks, ef so be the fellow was troublesome. And what's a prisoner? It's one thing to bring him off, and so much the better; but it's a more serious thing to bring one's self off, and save one's bacon. Ef he don't come soon—"

"Hark! Hush! There is a dog, Dick."

"It sounds a leetle like! Look you, cappin, we'd best take the boat and push her out to the river, we kin lie off and listen, and ef the Trailer comes down before the troopers, we kin take him aboard jist as easy as if we staid here, and resk'd our own necks. He'll find the way down to the mouth of the creek, for he knows, if he's got as much sense as a groundmole, that we're a hanging off and on."

"There goes a horse down to the right."

"Yis, and another right toward us. Them torches are this side of the bay. Let's put out, captain. It's an easy rush down to where we stands."

"Yet I am unwilling to leave the fellow."

"Never you mind him. Thar's no fear of the Trailer, ef so be he'll only cast off the prisoner, or lay him out, with a sharp tooth jest where he stands: us for us—look you, cappin, thar's no time for shilly-shally. They're a coming, by all the pipers, and with a rush. Look at all of them torches a coming together and jest hear them horses."

He seized Inglehardt by the wrist, and pulled him, still half

reluctant, down to the boat. They got in, and pushed her out into the deepest part of the creek, which, by the way, just at this point, was barely deep enough to float her, light and little as she was. The paddles were dipped carefully, and the dugout slipped forward without a murmur, her head down to the river. When she reached the mouth of the creek, Inglehardt took hold of the overhanging branches of a tree, and held fast. The paddles were taken in—they waited and listened.

Still they could see the torches and occasionally hear the tread of horses. It was now quite evident that the former were flaring about not far from the spot where they had stood.

“We didn’t put out a moment too soon, cappin.”

“No! They have completely surrounded the Trailer.”

“Ah! but he’s a raal mole for finding a way out, and lying close to the airth. I reckon they ain’t found him. We’d ha’ hearn something of it if they hed.”

“Hist! Thar’s a troop in motion.”

“It’s guine down. But you see, thar’s the lights still all along the edges of the swamp. I reckon Sinclair divided, and one hafe of his troop’s pushing for the village, looking a’ter us, and t’other’s beating the bushes.”

“The torches are going upward. They’re all together, as if in consultation.”

“Ay, I reckon they’ve gin it up as a bad job. They ain’t found nothing to pay them for the ile of their joints that’s worked out to-night.”

“What! do you think the Trailer has escaped.”

“Sure as a gun! I reckon he’s given Cappin Travis a touch of cold steel and laid him out under the bushes, and he’s taken a stretch alongside of him for company sake.”

“You don’t suppose he’s murdered Travis?”

“Tain’t murder in wartime, captain, and he’s done it in self-defence. Travis can’t give tongue, and the Trailer won’t, and they lie snug together between some old logs. That’s the how. Ef they had found the Trailer, or the cappin, dead or alive, wouldn’t they hev’ given tongue in a mighty hellabaloo? But they hain’t, and that makes me sure they hain’t found either of ’em. I reckon, cappin, we might put the nose of the dug-out up the creek again. By easy paddling, we can snake up, and

make no stir, to whar we was a standing before. Then, if we hears nothing, and them torches are a gitting fainter and fainter, I'll put out for the bay, and see if one old scout can scent the track of another. Rafe knows my whistle, jist as he knows one bird from another.

"Very good. Put about."

And the dug-out was sent up the creek again, and found her way to the former position without disturbing any unfriendly echoes.

During all this while, Sinclair and his troopers, as we have seen, had been busy brushing the forest. They had picked up three prisoners, who readily submitted and joined the troop of the conqueror. But the particular fugitives sought for had not been found; and, leaving a body of his followers, chiefly under the guidance of Jim Ballou, to scout while there was any hope of discovery, the major of dragoons pushed forward with all speed to Orangeburg.

After waiting some time on the movements of the scouting party of Ballou, whose torches were still to be seen occasionally, like so many flitting corpse candles through the distant woods, Dick of Tophet said:—

I reckon, cappin, it'll be quite safe to take a peep at the bay now and see what's 'come of the Trailer."

"Ay, we'll go together, Dick."

"Better don't you, cappin. Who knows what's a squatting in them woods a waiting to see upon whose shoulders it may jump. It's easier for one man to git cla'r of a spring than two; and though two's better for fighting than one, yet in a scouting affair like this, one's safest."

"Safe or not, Dick, I'll take a look at the woods along with you."

"Well, come along: but you've got no we'pon! Hyar's a pistol, one of mine. I've got the pair of that young catamount of Travis in my buzzom, but they ain't loaded."

"This will do. Push ahead."

"Close and saftly now, cappin," was the prompt answer, and they both entered the woods.

They moved cautiously, and reached the precincts of the bay without interruption. Then Devil Dick whistled—"Jist you

see," as he said, "an insinivating whistle, as if to say, thar's a little friendly bird a hopping about, and he tells you the hawks are all gone."

A very few moments only had elapsed when the signal was answered, and in five minutes more the party in search encountered the Trailer coming toward them.

"Lord, Rafe, how we hev' sweated for you."

"I reckon I've done a pretty bit of sweating for myself, old fellow, jist from thinking of the hug of the black bear that was a looking a'ter me. More than once I thought I had his very paws upon me. But a miss is good as a mile, and the sweat's gone off with the danger. I was jist awaiting to be sure that all was safe afore I ventured out to look a'ter you. I didn't dare to risk the signal, 'till I had snaked all round and a'tween the bay and the creek."

"You have had a narrow chainece, Brunson."

"Well—it's true—I hev'—but you see, cappin, ef a man has the experience and the sense, and ain't scary, but kin jist lie cool and wait his time, thar's hardly any chainece so narrow that a small sizeable man kain't squeeze through. I would hev' got to you long before the troopers worked down on the trail hyar, if it 'twarn't for that derved troublesome prisoner that you give me to bring along."

"What have you done with him?" demanded Inglehardt somewhat anxiously.

"Stowed him close away—"

"Hed to knife him, Rafe—eh?"

"You have not killed him, Brunson?"

"No, cappin—but I come mighty nigh to doing it. A leetle more and and I had done it. As 'twas, I made out by giving him a tickle of cold steel, now and then, in the throat and sides."

"Is he much hurt?"

"No, I reckon not—only a little sorish where I tickled him, and from a hard jam which I had to give him under long timber, with my weight screwed into his carcass."

The Trailer was allowed to detail his adventures *seriatim*. We shall condense his narrative to our limits.

Very much delayed as he had been in bringing down the

horses and providing for their transfer to the opposite side of the river, the Trailer, when he returned to his prison, found the distance between his position at the bay, and that of the scouting party of Sinclair very much lessened. This required the utmost decision, and the most prompt movement, in order to effect his object. Besides, greatly fatigued as he had been by his previous exertions, it demanded an extraordinary effort of will and energy to bring himself to any farther tasks. But the old scout and soldier is usually capable of these extraordinary efforts, and the Trailer set about his labors with sufficient resolves for his purpose. He untied the legs of Travis, and bade him walk. But Travis showed himself reluctant to do anything which could contribute to the prolongation of his captivity. He beheld the torches of the hunters, and he heard the trappings of their horses. He divined their object, and readily conjectured the whole history of Inglehardt's defeat at Holly-Dale, very much as we have been able to report. He was slow, therefore, to obey the requisitions of the Trailer, and with such near promise of succor. But he felt too entirely at the mercy of the fellow still, and knew too well how reckless of human life were all such persons at such moments, and he forebore open opposition, and aimed only to delay a progress which he could not avowedly withstand. At first he concluded to try if his custodian was corruptible. He offered him a liberal reward in money, to be paid him as soon as he could get back to Holly-Dale. Twenty guineas was a sum to dazzle the imagination of the scout under ordinary conditions, and the sum promised was increased to thirty. But the Trailer, not being a whit more virtuous than his neighbors, yet acknowledged certain laws and obligations. He was very much afraid, if the truth were known, of Dick of Tophet, his companion, to whom he ascribed fearful powers, and whose close neighborhood he was inclined to suspect. He was also sensible that he should establish a large claim upon Inglehardt by his fidelity in this very work in hand. Besides, he was a believer in the British crown, and in the potent sufficiency of the army of George the Third, to effect the permanent conquest of the country. Whatever were the considerations moving him to a virtuous resistance to the bribe offered—and we confess our inability to say or to conjecture

precisely what they were—it is enough to know that he rejected the tempting rewards offered by his captive—twenty, thirty, forty, and finally, fifty guineas—larger amounts than he had ever been possessed of, were thus rejected with the constancy of patriot virtue. This, at least, was his own story to Inglehardt. We are at liberty to believe it or not, as we please. He may have lied in this particular, and his policy might be simply to establish, in Inglehardt's mind, a true notion of the value of his services, by a reference to the sum which the opposite party was willing to pay for his escape.

Finding his bribes unavailing, and the troopers of Sinclair rapidly approaching, Travis changed his tactics and doggedly refused to walk.

“With that,” said the Trailer, “I out with my knife and put it to his throat. ‘Now,’ says I, ‘go, or I’ll cut away! Says he—‘You may cut me to pieces but I’ll not walk a step! That riled me. At first I thought to pick him up, and take him off bodily upon my shoulders. But, Lord, I was jest then hardly able to carry myself, and felt a most like lying down and letting the troopers do what they would with me. But I was riled, and I tickled him about the chin and throat, and he seed I was getting the hair up, and he took a few steps for’a’d. But then he stopped short agin, and so I put the knife, I reckon half an inch deep into his haunches. That sent him for’a’d a leetle further, but jest then, hearing a shout, and seeing as how the torches was a coming on pretty fast, he stopped again, and swore he’d not go a peg further; and he threatened me with all sorts of hangings, and burnings, and whippings, and what not, ef I didn’t wheel about and march with him into the inimy’s camp; and he then offered me his fifty guineas again, ef I’d do as he wanted me. Jest then, I looked about me, and I seed the torches coming down mighty fast, and I heard the horses’ feet heavy on the airth, and I seed that ef he kept me shilly-shally, going a bit and stopping another, that he’d git off, and git me into the halter besides, and so I seed that I had one way only—and jest then he got preticklarly bold and sassy, and I got more and more riled. I sweated like a bull in fly-time. So I jest looked at him a moment, and says I ‘You won’t go’—and says he ‘No, I won’t move a peg’—and jest as he said it, I

jumped on him full, and all spread out; and I brought him down to the airth, jest alongside of this great pine and by the old Harricane track, and, snake or no snake, I rolled him up, close agin the sides of the tree, with his face out, and I stretched myself down alongside of him, face in, and I fixed my knife at his throat, and I clapped my handkcher upon his mouth, and I said to him, softly through my shet teeth, 'Now, look you, ef you don't lie close, and keep still, by the etarnal fires, I'll slash your oozen [weasand] jest as quick as I would that of a fat shote in December. And so I had him, the tree fastening him along the back from head to heel, my knees agin him in front, my body agin his body, my face to his face, my handkcher on his mouth, and my knife agin his throat."

"Grim! That was a sarcumvention! eh! cappin!" exclaimed Dick of Tophet in admiration. Inglehardt said nothing, and the Trailer proceeded.

"So I hed him pretty sure, and he felt it. And he lay quiet enough, though the torches flared out a'most alongside—and I jest let him feel the tickle of the knife p'int now and then, to keep him sensible; but one time, one fellow jumped his horse clean over the logs and his hind feet lighted down, I reckon, not three feet above my head. Then I felt him twist about and try to shake his mouth free from my handkcher, but I put my knees into him, and I scraped his throat a leetle with the knife, and he sung small like a child that smells the hickories over the chimney-place. And thar he is—jest as quiet as ever—only mighty sore about the keel and upper timbers, I reckon, and with jest sech a taste of my knife, as will sarve his palate for the next twenty years.

In a moment, Dick of Tophet was engaged in the agreeable task of pulling out the captive from that durance vile, in which he had been so judiciously tickled into silence. He was extricated, quietly submitted, helped himself to rise, but said nothing. His condition could not well be discerned, as the party had no light.

"Can you walk, Captain Travis?" demanded Inglehardt.

"Yes!"

"Lead him along—to the boat."

Sore, indeed, suffering pain of body and of mind, but stern

of soul, and in some degree triumphant of soul as he felt sure of the escape of his family, of Rutledge and Sinclair—Travis was resigned to his fate. He, at least, would yield no triumph to his captor. He little dreamed of the pangs yet in reserve for him; and moved forward, with a stern calmness of demeanor to the creek between Devil Dick and the Trailer, though every step was taken in pain, and his whole body seemed in a very flame of fever.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

DOUBTS, HOPES, FEARS—A TANGLED YARN.

It was with a feeling of intense disappointment that Willie Sinclair found his search after Henry Travis fruitless. His duties imperatively required that he himself should forego it, after a certain period, and proceed to Orangeburg in prosecution of his military tasks. He did so, leaving Ballou, the scout, in charge of a small party commissioned to continue the pursuit so long as there remained any precinct in the vicinity unexamined.

He could not have left the affair in better hands. But Ballou found himself at fault. His hunt that night resulted in no discovery; and with the morning, he descended with his party into those recesses of the swamp which it was idle to attempt by night. His scouting in this region was nice and narrow. It was fruitless also, beyond the picking up of a couple more of the fugitives, one of whom was wounded by a pistol-bullet. The missing canoe led him to conjecture rightly the course which Inglehardt had taken. The absence of the slave Julius explained to the family the means by which the loyalist captain had been extricated from his bonds, and conclusively showed by whose agency the latter had been enabled to pick up so many of the secrets of the household. The only hope of the mother and sister, in respect to the safety of Henry Travis, lay in the hoped-for discoveries which Sinclair might make at Orangeburg. When this hope was expressed in the hearing of Ballou he was silent. Afterward, he said to 'Bram, the only comrade of the party to whom he condescended to utter his opinions freely:—

“No chance of that, 'Bram—no chance. Inglehardt knows better—knows better. He's picked up the boy, somehow. How, there's no telling jest yet; for you see, though we find

Inglehardt's track and the nigger's close to where the dugout lay at the landing, we don't find no other. The boys ain't there — ain't there. But you see, we hain't found Hell-fire Dick, and we hain't found the Trailer, and it's clear they've got off — got off. Now, can you guess how, 'Bram? How?"

"Nebber kin guess, Ballou."

"Well, did you see them tracks about the garden?"

"I bin see — for true."

"Very well. I've got the measure of Hell-fire Dick and the Trailer, and them's their tracks. Now, you see, they've worked off a-foot to yonder thick, and there you see where they had their horses fastened — there, now, they've got a chance and carried off the boy — that's the how — the how. None but horse tracks after that, and such a crowd of 'em, there's no telling which is which. If I had been a-foot, and me only, and in a fair daylight, I might have taken the track of all of them — all of them. But this hunting by fire-light — it only sarves to blind one's own eyes, and to show the inimy how to skulk the better — skulk the better. Inglehardt and Dick and the Trailer, and the boy, and maybe Captain Travis himself, are all off somewhere together. The dugout could carry off three of them I reckon, and they may have picked up another boat along the river to carry off the whole. But what they've done with the horses there's no telling yet, and only one way to find out, and I'm for a search down along the river as far as Four-mile Branch to see *where they've put in*. For put in they must have done somewhere. They never made down the road — they never made up. They swum the river, or found a ford, and we must find out the how and the where. When we've done that, we can make a pretty sure guess as to what's become of them. My notion is they've crossed the horses, and dropped down the river themselves, leaving one of the party to fetch a compass through the woods and round the village with the horses."

"I 'speck you right, Ballou."

"I reckon I am. And now, 'Bram, I don't mean to take any of you fellows along with me on this search. You, and these dragoons, will stay here, and keep guard over the family, tell you get your orders from the major. And jest you say to Madam Travis and the young lady that I'm hard after *sign*

[trail-track] and that I'm mighty hopeful. Tell 'em there's no danger of any harm coming to the lad, *excepting* the captivity—*excepting* the captivity. You kin tell her this jest as well as me, and, *prehaps*, a little better; for I do hate to lie when I'm reporting about a scout, and if I see her a-weeping, and sobbing, and wringing her hands, I know I shall have to lie as bad as any regular trooper—lie as bad as a trooper—as a trooper!—and, Lord knows, lying comes as natural to a trooper as mother's milk to an infant, or whiskey to a militiaman, or roast pork to a famishing Christian nigger in cool weather. Now, you hear, I don't forbid you to lie a little if you see the case requires it—if the grief's very hard to bear—and you hear the women a-screaming too bad. You may tell what bloody lie you please to make 'em quiet, and strengthen their hearts, and make 'em feel better, and fill 'em with hope—fill 'em with hope. If 'twant about scouting, I could lie to 'em too, as well as anybody; but a scout that don't see sign must n't *say* sign. Such a scout's no better than a mangy dog that barks up the wrong tree—a mangy dog."

"Knock 'em on he head."

"Exactly! He ain't fit to live. Now, 'Bram, you understand what you're to do and to say. You kin lie a bit, I tell you, if you see that it will do the ladies good, and ease their afflictions, and you kin say that I'm on the track, and that I've found sign, and that you reckon I'll have the boy back again in a few days—a few days—have him back. And I hope I will, 'Bram, though I don't see the sign, and you're to stick to the house, and keep a sharp eye about you, and wait the major's orders and just you tell him that I'll keep out until I can make a sensible report."

"I yerry!"

"Very well! all right, so far. And now, 'Bram, do you see that?"

Here he pulled a corpulent quart bottle from his coat pocket.

"Ha! wha' dat, Jim Ballou? 'tis bottle."

"Well, you're a wise nigger, after seeing it, to guess so quick. But, do you know what's in the bottle?"

"I guess he whiskey. Ha?"

"Not a bit of it. It's nothing worse, 'Bram, than good old Jamaica. Smell of it, if you wish to be sartain."

"I kin tell 'em more better by de tas'e."

"Well, if you can't tell Jamaica by the smell, the liquor's not the sort to do you any good by the taste."

"Psho, Jim Ballou, dat's berry foolish sawt o' talk! Whay you git dat Jimmaker?"

"Out of the pocket of the red-headed fellow that we found half dead in the swamp this morning. I reckon he was bit with the liquor before he got the bite of the bullet. You see that there's a pretty considerable swig gone out of it; and the cork being a good one, I reckon it never went out of its own accord, and only by word of command."

"Look yer, Jim Ballou, you guine to pull at that Jimmaker?"

"Bram, I'd jest freely give my leetle finger now, cut off clean, to swallow one good mouthful of this charming creature—I would—my leetle finger—for only one good mouthful. I hankers for it, 'Bram. But I durstn't drink. I've swore a most eternal oath, and it's as much as my soul's worth to taste of the beautiful varmint. But you shall drink on my account, and I'll charge to you. There! take a swig. Is it good, 'Bram?"

The negro's potation was deep; the stream poured down without a gurgle. The throat offered no resistance, and the prudent hands of Ballou finally tore away the bottle from the fellow's mouth. A smack of the lips, a long drawn sigh, and suddenly humid eyes, attested 'Bram's satisfaction.

"Is it so sweet, nigger?"

"Like de milk ob Heabben, Jim Ballou."

"You love it too much, 'Bram."

"You too, Ballou!"

"Yes, but I can't trust myself to taste. If I only taste, I'm gone. Can I trust you, 'Bram?"

"Wha' for no truss me? leff de bottle wid me, Ballou."

"If you give me your word of honor, 'Bram, that you'll only swallow one-half to-day, and t'other half to-morrow."

"I sway!—"

"No! don't *you* swear! But just give me your word of honor as I tell you. There's enough for you, two days, if you drink like a gentleman."

"Psho! for able-bodied pusson like me, Jim Ballou, de liquor guine sarve only for one day."

"Yes, but you're to drink like a gentleman, not like an able-bodied person—a gentleman, 'Bram—a gentleman."

"For two day, den, I must 'habe [behave] like gemplemans?"

"Yes."

"But s'posing de young lady, Miss Bert'a, say to me, yer 'Bram, somet'ing to drink?"

"Then you're to keep the Jamaica for another day."

"Ha! Jim Ballou, you mighty hard 'pon dis nigger."

"You won't get it until you promise. Remember, you rascal, how *I* love it."

"I promise. Ballou—ef I doesn't, you only guine to drink 'em you se'f and lose your 'spectability."

"Take it—and put it out of my sight, 'Bram. It's mighty hard work to keep my mouth from it. It's a sore trial of the flesh—sore—a sore trial of the flesh. Hide it from my sight. I'm mighty weak and thirsty."

"I'll tink 'bout you when I drinks, Ballou. Hope 'twill do you good, same as ef you bin drunk you se'f."

"Thank you! And now, 'Bram, keep your eyes bright, or the Philistines will be upon you. Remember all I've told you. Good-by, old fellow; I'm going to put out this very minute. Good-by! Don't forget, if you see too much grief going on, to put in a lie now and then about the *sign*."

"I 'member all wha' you say."

And the two shook hands and parted—the scout burying himself at once in the recesses of the swamp, and 'Bram taking his way toward the house, resolved upon any amount of lying, if he thought that the afflictions of the ladies should need that wholesome kind of sedative.

Meanwhile, Sinclair had startled all the echoes in Orangeburg. It was night still, and very dark, when his cavalry thundered up the streets. What could it mean? Who could it be? While the question was undecided, whig and tory kept equally close.

Sinclair darted at once upon the jail. It was a sort of citadel. The post of jailer was held by an invalided Scotch sergeant, who very reluctantly threw open his doors to the rebel troopers. The commissariat was soon emptied of arms and ammunition. A score of rifles, as many of muskets, bayonets,

a bale or two of blankets, and a variety of odds and ends in the way of arms, implements, and clothing—not too great a burden, however, for the troopers to divide and carry off upon their saddles, rewarded the raid. Petty as was the spoil, it was of very considerable importance to the Carolinians, half of whom were bare at hip and elbow—many only in part armed, and not a few without any weapons. The war of liberty rarely implies adequate provision for its champions.

It was several hours after daylight before our major of dragoons had sufficiently done his work in the village. Sixteen wild Irish were extricated from the dungeon, charged with the Irish virtue of mutiny and insubordination. Without asking questions, they hailed their deliverer with a shout. He had but one question to ask of them:—

“Who are you for—King George or freedom?”

“Is it fradom, do you say?” was the reply with one voice. “Och! thin, the divil fly away with King George, and all the other kings upon airth! Hoorah for the fradom, and Ameriky for iver!”

It was no use to expostulate with such ready converts to the true faith, or to put them under any special ordeal for the trial of their virtues. They were at once marched out into the open air, and enrolled in the ranks. Then followed the search for Inglehardt and his retainers and captives. But, after ransacking all suspected places, to the no small terror of the lurking loyalists, Sinclair was compelled to abandon the search in that quarter. He was in despair. No trace of Inglehardt—no sign of Henry Travis.”

Noon found him back at Holly-Dale. Bertha was the first to hail his approach from the upper windows, and to rush out to meet him.

“Oh! Willie, what of Henry?”

But she read his answer in his looks, and wrung her hands, while the tears rolled down her cheeks.

“Nothing! nothing! Has Ballou made no discoveries?”

“He is gone in search. ‘Bram says that he is on the track—that there are signs—and that he is in hope of finding him. He went alone. The soldiers are here.”

“And ‘Bram?”

"He is here also. Ballou preferred to go alone."

"He was right. Do not fear, Bertha. Ballou will find him."

"But if he is hurt, Willie?"

"No fear of that. He is evidently carried off. Inglehardt has secured him while making his own escape."

"Have you had no signs of him?"

"None! He has probably got across, or gone down the river; but he can not escape us long, dear Bertha; and, meanwhile, there is no reason to suppose that he will harm the boy. His game, I see. It is his policy to save him, but to keep him, and your father too, as pledges for you."

Here the mother joined them.

"My child, Sinclair—my child!"

Her eyes were dry, but wild, red, fearful to behold. Sinclair renewed his assurances, his encouragements, the expression of his hopes, the grounds for their security. These hardly reached or satisfied the senses of the mother. She could only repeat—

"My child! my child! my poor, poor boy! He was never away from me one night in his life. And, now—in what condition is he? in whose hands—how suffering? Oh! Willie Sinclair, will you not bring me back my boy?"

"I would die to do so, my dear Mrs. Travis! I will do all that can be done!"

How feeble are all words, all promises, all expressed hopes, in such a case, addressed to the ears of a mother!

It was long before she could vary this one note, or speak or think of other things. But, suddenly, she grasped Sinclair by the wrist:—

"It was this danger that he feared! He would have provided for this very chance! Here me, Willie. You have my husband's letter. I am aware of what it contains. He bade me follow all its instructions in the event of his failure to return yesterday. You remember what they are?"

Sinclair nodded his head affirmatively.

"You are to have all the negroes transferred immediately to the Santee plantation. Bertha and myself are to follow them as soon as possible, and she is to become your wife—if you are prepared for it—without a moment's delay."

The cheeks of Bertha grew to crimson.

"His letter to me," answered Sinclair, "is to this very effect. I have planned the mode, and have the means, for conveying the negroes and your most valuable moveables to a place of security. Kit Rowe undertakes to convey your furniture to his plantation. Your husband has sent me his signature to a bill of sale, conveying it absolutely to Rowe. It may thus be saved. In your absence, the tories will probably destroy your house. Your cattle I shall have transferred to Greene's army. Your horses, except such as you need for your own purposes, I will take on account of the state for our troopers, several of whom have none. You will need but four for your journey to the Santee; and the sooner you set out the better, since escape, in two days more, will be next to impossible; Rawdon's army being in progress from the Congaree, Colonel Stewart from Charleston, and Cruger with a swarm of loyalists from above, and pressing down upon the route to Orangeburg between the two Edistos. They will pass your door. Your policy will be to force your way between Rawdon and Stewart, before they can effect a junction."

"But how can I leave Holly-Dale, Willie, and no tidings of my child?"

"You need not remain on this account. I shall see that tidings reach you, wherever you are, as soon as we obtain them. In remaining here, you know not what you risk. All this region will be under the control of the enemy, until we can come to blows with him, and, should we fail, you will be more at the mercy of the foe than ever."

It was a hard task with the mother to leave Holly-Dale while her son's fate was doubtful.

"Oh! Willie, should he return, the poor boy, and find nobody to receive him!"

Of course, this notion of his voluntary return was combated as a great improbability, by Sinclair.

"He will not be suffered the chance to escape, my dear Mrs. Travis, by those who have him in captivity. I have no doubt that the same person who has carried off the father, has the son in custody also. I make no doubt they are both together. Neither will reappear, until brought back by Inglehardt, or until rescued by his foes. We shall spare nothing for the latter

object; and you need not wait here for the former. Whenever it is Inglehardt's cue to restore your son and husband, he will find no difficulty in doing so, go where you will. And go you must! Pardon me this earnestness, but you must suffer me to be master now. Submit—confide in me, dear Mrs. Travis—as the mother in her son.”

“And you will be my son? Yes, Willie, I submit—I confide! God be merciful to me, Willie!—under him, I have now no hope but in you!”

She threw her arms about his neck and sobbed upon his shoulder.

“And how, and when shall the marriage take place, Willie?”

Bertha's cheeks flushed once more to crimson at the question, and she was turning away when the answer of Sinclair arrested her.

“There can be no marriage *now*, my dear Mrs. Travis. That is just now impossible.”

Red and pale alternately did the cheeks of Bertha become in a single moment—pride and shame both active at a word. Mrs. Travis withdrew her hands from the affectionate rest which they had taken on Sinclair's shoulder.

“How, sir, no marriage?”

“None just now, my dear mother;—and you, Bertha”—here he caught her hand—“do not you misunderstand me! No gift could be more precious to me than this hand, now and for ever! But I dare not, for your sakes, clasp it in marriage *now*! Were I to do so, we should lose all hold on Inglehardt—forfeit every hope of safety for Mr. Travis, if not for Henry. Such an act would precipitate the fate of one or both. It would cut Inglehardt off from that object, for which he keeps both of them in captivity. Were we married, he would at once sacrifice your husband to the fury of Balfour. He would expose those secrets which now give him a hold upon your father, and would denounce him, as the possibility no longer remained of securing the daughter through the terrors which he would seek to inspire in regard to the father's fate. While there is still a prospect of obtaining your hand, your father is safe. Cut off that prospect, and we have no security.”

"But it was even this very state of things, his arrest and captivity, which my husband anticipated."

"True, my dear madam, and his commands, contemplating this prospect, afford a generous example of self-sacrifice, and are highly honorable; but he never once contemplated the capture and detention of his son. He never dreaded that the son's fate, no less than his own, rested upon the disposition of his daughter's hand. Heaven knows—nay, Bertha knows—that no blessing of Heaven could be more grateful to my soul than the instant possession of this dear girl's hand; but when I see the peril which it involves, to father and son alike, I dare not touch it—I dare not espouse her! We must wait! We are at the mercy of this base, cold-blooded villain, and you both know him only too well, to need that I should say, that our marriage would be fatal to the safety of Mr. Travis, and possibly to that of our dear boy, Henry."

"God be merciful!" groaned the mother, as the true situation in which she stood became apparent to her understanding. "God be merciful to me a mother! Oh! Willie Sinclair, I have ceased to think. I can only feel and fear. Do with me as you please. Give your orders. I obey. I submit without question—only tell me that you will save my husband—that you will give me back my boy."

"If human will and effort may do this, mother, at any hazard, it shall be done. Bertha, you do not doubt me? You are not angry?"

"Doubt you, Willie—angry with you! No! no! I trust you as my own soul. I love you as my life. Believe me! believe me, Willie. Though we never marry, Willie Sinclair, I am still yours, yours only!"

And the ingenuous girl flung her arms about her lover's neck, and kissed him as if he had been a brother. There was no longer a doubt—a cloud—a shadow—between their loves!

CHAPTER XXXIX.

FLIGHT FROM HOLLY-DALE.

THE plans of the family having been satisfactorily discussed that afternoon between the two ladies and Sinclair, the latter gathered the negroes of the plantation together early that night, and made them a little speech. 'Bram was formally introduced to them as their friend and guide. They were to travel under his direction. They were told, as were the Israelites of old, that the Santee country was the land of milk and honey—or rather of molasses, corn in abundance, any number of pigs, and 'coon and 'possum beyond any computation. A negro so relishes a change that he will even forget the charms of a first, for a second or even a third and fourth wife, and is always prepared for new lodgings. You can scarcely remove him too frequently for his own satisfaction. He is a creature of great levity, steadfast in nothing, except appetite, and feels more fully than any other people that moral of the vulgar—" *Omne ignotum pro magnifico!*" The unknown is to him always a Canaan of unqualified delights.

The fraternity seemed very well pleased with the prospect as painted to them by Sinclair, but lest anything should be wanting in his delineations, 'Bram himself took up the parole, where his master finished, and discoursed to them after his own fashion of eloquence.

"Yerry to me, brudderren, and you, my belubbed sisterren, be so good as to yerry to wha' I hab for say. Buckrah know someting, but he dun no ebbryting. Maussa, de major, is a bery sensible gemplemans, but he ain't always know de reasonable occasions and argymentations for mek de ting clear and comprehensible to de infections and onderstandings of a regenerate nigger. Now, you see, 'Bram hab all he maussa sense, da's

white man sense, and he hab all nigger sense besides, and da's he own. De ting wha' he tell you is no mo' dan de massiful trute: but he's no tell you half ob de good ting and de pleasure of dat same country 'pon de Santee. 'Bram knows 'em better dan de major know he book. When you git to dat country you nebber kin dead. For who guine dead so long as fat pig day run ebbry way onder he eye? You see fat pig dat run 'bout yer 'pon de Edisto, squeaking as he run, 'Come roas' me—come roas' me?' I ax you, brudder and sisteren, how long sense you bin see sich purty critter as dat a running yer 'pon de Edisto?"

Here a grunt and murmur from the crowd.

"Well, you know wha's *yer*, and you know wha' *ain't* yer! But *I* know wha's a waiting for you 'pon de Santee. *Yer*, de sodger, Whig and tory, eat up de pig—nebber le' 'em grow to running fat; *dar*, on de Santee, de pig is so plenty dat—dat he eat up de sodger!"

"Ki! de Lawd ha' massy. Oh! da!"

"It's a trute. De pig *dar* is so fat and sassy, dat he fair ax you for eat 'em. He dun no wha' for do wid hese'f. You jis' hab for knock 'em down as he run for sabe you' se'f. Ef you don't, you wake up in de morning, and you ain't fin' yourse'f 'tall—only leettle eend o' youse'f—de pig is eat de res'."

"Ki! de Lawd delibber us! Who ebbber yer ob sich country befo'."

"It's a trute, my sisteren. But de pig ain't all. De cawn grow jis' at de bery sight ob de hoe; de chicken crow jis' as he shak' off de shell; de 'simmon [persimmon] so tick, dat you kin catch twenty-seben and fifteen 'possum and coon a' night on de same tree; and der's no eend to sich eatable leettle varmint as de squirll and rabbit. Dem you knocks ober wid little stick when you is walking 'bout in de sunset."

A pause—giving opportunity to the full and fervid expression of applause.

"An' it's p'inted for me, brudder and sisteren, 'Bram, to show you de way to dat most blessed splendiferous country ob meat and molasses. And jis' you follow me—do de ting I tell you—lie close when I say—'Nigger's, dem dam tory is about;' and push forward, quick as *runner* [black snake] when I say,

‘Now’s de time for shaking de rheumatic out ob de legs’—and I carries you safe I tell you, to dat heabben ob a country. Is you willing, I axes?—brudder and sisteren, le’ me yer from you. Is you willing to eat pig? Da’s de fuss question.”

The acclamatory and affirmative grunt was unanimous.

“Meat and molasses; coon and ‘possum; pork and purtatoes; hog and hom’ny; lightwood a plenty, and de beautifullest and tickest swamp in de wo’ld. Enty dese is excellling beautiful tings for sensible nigger?”

The eloquence of ‘Bram was irresistible. He supplied all the deficiencies in the argument of Sinclair.

That night the whole force of the plantation—leaving only the coachman, cook, and one maid-servant, who were destined to attend the ladies when they went—disappeared before midnight. A little covered wagon contained the children, and the provisions necessary for the support of the whole party along the route. ‘Bram had his instructions. He was to travel only by night; to lie close in swamp or thicket during the day; to avoid the great thoroughfares; use *neighborhood roads* or open pine woods when he could, and strike for the ferry known as Nelson’s. It was feared that the upper ferries, might be in possession of the enemy. His route was to be sinuous, and he was not to hurry forward in the face of any risk. His supply of provisions was ample for an encampment of ten days. We need but add, that ‘Bram was equal to the task, and knew all the sinuosities of the country. He was also scout enough to know how to take cover in season, and he rarely forgot his precaution. Leaving him to pursue his course according to his own discretion, Sinclair addressed himself to such duties as remained to him at Holly-Dale.

The morning after ‘Bram’s departure, St. Julien rode in with his troopers. His report showed him to have been busy. He had dispersed a small gathering of tories at Dean’s swamp, securing a few prisoners, and a score or two of broad swords and rifles. Coulter, it seems, had had a brush with the black dragoons of Captain Quash, had cut up a score of them, and in a personal encounter with Quash, had the satisfaction of cropping off one of his ears, in a well-intended sabre-stroke at his head. Quash was a negro, captain of one of the few corps of negroes whom the British had

ventured to uniform. He had a very pretty command, sable and scarlet, of forty-five troopers, but though runaways and ruffians, they were not found very serviceable, being always more successful in the onslaught upon a hen-roost than upon any game customers.

The arrival of St. Julien enabled Sinclair to furnish a proper escort for the ladies in their progress to the Santee. This had been a subject of some embarrassment with him till this moment, since the orders of Marion and Rutledge required his own presence at camp. Great events were ripening, and the necessities of Greene and his policy, required that he should draw his forces to a head, in order to a demonstration upon Rawdon, who, it was now understood, was embarrassed in various ways—was himself an invalid—with troops exhausted by forced marches in midsummer, and not a few of them very much indisposed to the service. The Irish troops at once raw and mutinous, were a great source of uneasiness and apprehension.

It may be necessary, at this stage of our narrative, and for the better comprehension of its details in future, to take a brief survey of the relative condition of the two great warring parties in the state. We have seen that Rawdon, after relieving the post of Ninety-Six, has been compelled to abandon it. His resources did not suffer him to retain a position so remote from the seaboard, which he could not adequately garrison; and he well knew that, as soon as he should begin his return to the Lower Country, the several American forces would again concentrate about the position, the fall of which would then be inevitable, and would lose to him a body of troops, which his present exigency would not suffer him to spare. Accordingly, calling around him the loyalist chiefs of the precinct, a fierce and hardy class with numerous followers, he advised them of the necessity which required that he should abandon the place. This was equivalent to their abandonment to a fate which their own provocations well assured them would be a merciless one. The alternative that remained to them was flight. They recognised the melancholy necessity, and prepared with their wives and little ones to depart from their ancient homesteads. To cover their departure from the American patriots, Rawdon left behind him one half of his army, from twelve to fifteen hundred men,

under the conduct of Cruger, the colonel who had so long, and with so much courage and ability, defended the post of Ninety-Six. This force was to follow him as soon as the fugitive people were prepared for their painful exodus. No long time was needed for preparation, in fact could not be allowed, since they had every reason to apprehend the early return of the American army. Rawdon, meanwhile, set out with a rapidity of movement which almost threatened the destruction of his army—fifty of his men falling dead in their tracks, during a five-days' march, the victims to the terrible heat of the season, and that degree of fatigue which admitted of no recuperation. His course once ascertained, his force was such as might be controlled readily by that of Greene. To escape this danger was one reason for the rapidity of his march. His further purpose was co-operation, by a particular day, with Colonel Stewart, who, with a large detachment and convoy of provisions, was instructed, marching from Charleston, *via* Orangeburg, to meet him at Granby by the third of July. Cruger, meanwhile, was already on the march from Ninety-Six, and directing his columns for the route between the Edistos on the way to Orangeburg.

With the first knowledge of the course taken by Rawdon, Greene's army was put in motion to overtake him. At Winnsborough, the American general disembarassed his pursuit of all unnecessary baggage, of everything that might impede his progress, and, under the command of General Huger, the army pressed forward for the Congarees. Greene, himself, with a small escort of cavalry moving in advance of his army, with special celerity in the hope of finding the command of Colonel Washington (cavalry) with which, and other resources, he meditated a special enterprise against the convoy and re-enforcements designed for the relief of Rawdon.

The latter, alarmed at these movements, increased the celerity of his own, and reached Granby two days sooner than he expected, and accordingly long before Colonel Stewart could possibly reach the same place. Intercepted letters had apprized the Americans that Stewart could not make the junction with his superior at the contemplated time. Meanwhile, the American cavalry, in which arm the patriots held a vast superiority, had succeeded in cutting that of the British to pieces, a disaster

which rendered Rawdon far more uneasy and apprehensive than before. Up to the occurrence of this event his policy had been adopted to establish himself upon the Congaree, circumscribing his operations in the interior to the space comprised within the Edisto to the west, and the Congaree and Santee to the north and east. But, with the loss of his cavalry, the failure to procure provisions or intelligence—for the forayers of Marion and Sumter swept all the highways—the audacity of the American cavalry, the rapid approach of the hostile army, and by this time advised of the inability of Stewart to meet him at the time appointed, Lord Rawdon felt that the power was no longer in his hands which would enable him to choose his own position. It became necessary that he should press down toward Orangeburg with all despatch, if he would save his detachments, or escape the dangers which were accumulating about himself. His situation was becoming desperate, and the forced marches which he was required to undertake, in which so many of his troops succumbed, were necessary to the safety of his whole force.

To place himself in advance of Rawdon, with all his mounted men, dart below and strike at Stewart and his convoy, on their advance from Charleston, was the obvious policy of Greene. Wanting in cavalry, the British general had no means of arresting or retarding this progress, for the proper performance of which Greene proceeded to put all his resources in requisition. Lee was to hasten to a junction with Washington, and Sumter and Middleton were to co-operate in the same object—the destruction of Stewart. It would be curious to the military student, and highly instructive, to see how these plans, well conceived as they were, all ultimately failed; and chiefly through that lack of method and due subordination of the agents and accessories to the principal, which is the chief vice in militia and volunteer organizations. Neither Middleton nor Lee joined Washington, and the latter employed himself, almost unnecessarily, in front of Rawdon's advance, endeavoring fruitlessly to retard his march. Sumter was engaged above in an independent enterprise on the Catawba, and when Washington was finally diverted from harassing the march of Rawdon, and sought the co-operation of Marion, the time had passed. But

we must not anticipate. Marion, with four hundred mounted men, made his appearance at Washington's headquarters with wonderful promptness. Greene arrived soon after, and taking command of their united forces, he resolved to lead the enterprise against Stewart in person. Pressing down the Orangeburg road, on the sixth of July, he succeeded in passing Rawdon, and reserving to himself a company of Washington's cavalry, with which to watch the progress of the British army, he despatched Marion with his mounted men to the encounter with Stewart.

This brings us to the period of pause in our story. At the moment, therefore, when it became necessary for Mrs. Travis and her daughter to quit Holly-Dale, six separate bodies of troops, each considerable in number, were approaching the precinct; the purpose of all being equally concentrated in our little village of Orangeburg. Rawdon and Cruger from above, each with twelve or fifteen hundred regular troops, the latter accompanied by a swarm of auxiliary loyalists; Stewart from below, with a detachment of five hundred, the strength and utility of which were necessarily curtailed by the encumbrance of a lengthened convoy; Marion's and Washington's commands; the main army of the Americans, under Huger, following close upon the heels of Rawdon; while Pickens, with a force of mounted gun-men, was equally earnest in pressing upon the heels of Cruger. These details will sufficiently answer to show the reader by what influences the action of our dramatic personæ is liable to be controlled, what are the embarrassments before them, and what the succoring agencies upon which they may call, in the moment of exigency. They will also explain the urgency of that necessity which required Sinclair to make his way to the camp, subduing his feelings, and foregoing his own purposes, in obedience to those of the country.

It was with no pleasant emotions that he prepared to depart from the pleasant homestead which still contained for him so many precious associations. Love—and, dragoon as he was, he was by no means insensible to the tenderest infirmities of that all-subjugating passion;—apprehension—for how could he anticipate the events which were to occur, of annoyance or positive danger, accompanying the doubtful progress of his

sweetheart and her mother across the country?—grief and anxiety for the loss and absence of Henry Travis, of whose fate nothing could be known—these were sufficient to afflict and render our major of dragoons unhappy, without even glancing at the minor cares and embarrassments which yet taxed his mind and increased his apprehensions—as, for example, the progress of the negroes of Travis, under the guidance of Abram. True, Abram was faithful, and shrewd beyond the usual capacity and virtues of his race; but, though a good scout, he was a poor soldier, and the only calculations which could be predicated of this trust must rest wholly on the natural cunning of the fellow, his fidelity, and perfect knowledge of the woods.

Sinclair, of course, used all his resources and exercised all his forethought in order to meet the various duties before him. His *fiancee* and her mother he intrusted to the charge of one whom he knew to be a brave and good soldier and a noble gentleman; in respect to Henry Travis, Jim Ballou, the best scout in the service, was upon his trail; and he had no reason to doubt that 'Bram could worm his way across the country, so as to escape the troops of Stewart on the one hand and the forces of Rawdon on the other. These were the chief dangers that threatened to cross his path. Of outlying parties of the Tories he had little fear whenever the main armies were in the precinct. On such occasions the forayers usually disappeared, or melted away, and became merged in the greater masses; as is the case usually with outsiders, or third parties in politics, when an election (which is a battle) approaches. At all events, whether satisfied with his arrangements or not, Sinclair was compelled to be content with what had been done, and, having given his last instructions to St. Julien, to prepare for his own hurried departure for camp. A select troop of twenty-five men was left with St. Julien, while the residue, somewhat swollen by recruits from the troop of Inglehardt, he reserved for his own command.

It was a trying moment, that which called for the departure of Sinclair from Holly-Dale. Bertha Travis was a damsel of great strength of character, great serenity of mood, calm, patient, resolute, yet loving and docile. She inherited these virtues

from her mother. Neither of them gave way utterly to their sorrows, yet felt them so much the more acutely. They had surely sufficient cause to mourn. In how few hours had their home of pleasantness and peace been changed to one of anxiety, grief, and apprehension. Sinclair could feel for them. Perhaps, of all three, he showed the most despondency at parting. The first burst of grief over, the mother grew to hope. Her prayer now was for performance. Could she be doing now—could she engage in the search after her son—an idea that more than once agitated her brain—she would have been easier in spirit. As it was, she could only implore Sinclair to activity, and he—he could only promise, with, possibly, so many mental reservations, none of which he dared to express—that the promise might well be regarded as a dream. But he did promise, and with the full purpose to perform. He was no laggard, no sham of a man; but earnest, daring, resolute. Be sure that he will attempt—do if possible—much more than he ever promises.

And Bertha? Oh! how calmly, sweetly, resignedly, she murmured her farewell upon his shoulder—in his very bosom. It might be the last. Poor Bertha! She too thought to be doing. Oh! if she were but a man! Yet the thought as she looked upon Sinclair, seemed something worse than an absurdity. Yet she schooled it into a subdued desire to be with him—to see him perform the tasks of manhood—strike for her brother—rescue the dear boy from the enemy—from his miserable captivity. It was the prime source and secret of her strength and calmness, that she never once doubted he would do this. Oh! that precious faith of the loving young heart that confides so much in the being whom it loves—that believes him equal to all emergencies—that finds heroism in his look and gesture, and, in every period has no doubt that the world possesses at least one demigod.

How silent, sad, precious sweet, was their parting, as Sinclair rode off with his troop at break of day.

“Willie,” was the murmur of the dear girl, “oh! Willie, remember my poor mother. She looks to you.”

“I will never forget her.”

The last words of the mother:—

"Willie Sinclair, bring me back my boy—my boy!"

They rang in the ears of our major of dragoons at every step which increased the distance between him and Holly-Dale.

And he was gone—gone from sight—and then, in the solitude of her chamber, Bertha Travis shed bitter, bitter tears. It was only with his departure that she grew hopeless. But the mother's hopes seemed to grow with his absence.

"He will bring Henry back," she murmured to Bertha, in the lowest tones, as if she feared that the walls would hear and interpose.

The next day, in the stately family carriage, drawn by four stout blooded bays, and driven by Cato, of great frame and bulk, and singular in the possession of one eye only, Mrs. Travis, her daughter and maid, took their departure from Holly-Dale, under the escort of St. Julien. We must not at present think to note their course, or follow their fortunes. This concern will employ us possibly hereafter. Meanwhile, even then, the advance of Cruger, consisting of mounted loyalists, hungry and sullen, was entering the territory lying between the two Edistos, and pressing down toward Orangeburg. That day, old Kit Rowe carried off the chattels which he had *purchased*, under secret articles. Three nights afterward Holly-Dale was in ashes. So much for the tender mercies of the tories.

CHAPTER XL.

THE SCOUT—THE FUGITIVES—THE TRAIL.

JIM BALLOU swept the swamp forest tract lying between Holly-Dale and Four-Mile creek, with the close and eager eye of a hawk. Nothing escaped his scrutiny. He could find very decided *signs*, where you and I would see nothing but smooth surface. We can not detail his process, or follow all his steps, or note the thousand minutiae which drew his attention, or diverted it, as he sped. It will suffice if we mention that in reviewing the route over which the scouting party had gone the night before, he at length found the *bay* where Inglehardt had established his rendezvous, and on the edge of which, where the Trailer had held Travis in durance vile. He saw that some uses had been made of the place. He noted where the steeds of the fugitives had been fastened. He followed the course which they had been conducted when finally carried off, until he reached the creek, and under the fringy willows along its margin, discovered where the dugout had been run up, with her nose stuck lightly into the pliant ooze of the swamp. He identified the impression as the same with that made by the dugout at Holly-Dale. He had thus gained one step. He did not lose it. He now noted all the impressions of the miry tract about him. He found where the horses had been led down to the spot where the creek enters the river, and into the river when made to swim or wade across beside the boat. He examined especially the tracks of the horses. Each one was found to have some distinguishing mark by which it could be tracked hereafter. In one in particular, a fragment of the shoe was gone. In another, the rivet was awkwardly curled and obtrusive; in a third, a nail was wanting. He so studied each that recognition would instantly follow his encounter with them on any future occasion.

He found the tracks of Inglehardt and the negro boy Julius, and there were the huge feet, broad as an elephant's, of Devil Dick, and there were the long narrow footmarks of the Trailer.

"Got 'em all here!—all here!" said the soliloquizing scout, with a chuckle of satisfaction. "If I could only keep 'em now! They've crossed! that's clear—for they couldn't be taking the nags down stream nor up. They've crossed! And good reason for it too—good reason. This side the river was too hot for 'em. Well, they've crossed. But do they stick there! That's the question—question. I must nose 'em out before I walk into their camp—nose 'em out! Must wait till dark—dark; then swim across—swim—put in a leetle above—then snake down upon 'em—snake down from above. I see just where to put in—just; the old ford will answer. But shall I want my horse? I reckon. They'll put out, and I must after 'em. Yes, must have the horse. So! we'll see if nobody's found the old fellow out in his hiding-place. Found him out. We'll take the ford, hide the critter above, snake down and nose 'em out. Got their measure—all. Devil Dick's foot, Inglehardt's, Trailer's, nigger's. Must see I don't find 'em too sudden. Four to one—four. But I can snake 'em. It's only a fool nigger that grunts as he goes—hog fashion—grunts as he goes. The dog that hunts the deer has a reason for giving tongue: but where its wolf or tiger, set the teeth down, fast as a trap, even if you bite off the tongue. Snake down, and nose close; nose close and snake down. Got the measure of every rascal's foot in all the gang—every rascal's foot."

We suppose that everybody can gather Ballou's policy from his soliloquy. He resolved upon his course, while gazing from close covert, a little before sunset, across the Edisto to the point opposite the mouth of Four-Mile Branch. He noted with understanding eye, every detail which might possibly affect his future operations.

"They've struck inside that bank t'other side. They've pushed for the close thicket behind it. There's a great dead cypress just over it, with one big arm p'inting out down the river. I must look out for that cypress. It stands just over a mighty big laurel, and I reckon its sandy and swampy about, all hammocky. Good for snaking."

A couple of hours enabled him to find his horse in the thicket where he had hidden him, and afforded him the darkness requisite for his safe progress across the river. Fastening his horse in the swamp over a mile above the place of supposed harborage of the fugitives and their captives, Ballou proceeded to "snake down" upon their camp.

His calculations had proved correct in most particulars. He found his dead cypress, his living laurel, his hammocky harboring places, and the spot where the horses had been landed. But the birds had flown. Their nests were all warm—the trail was fresh—"hot" as Ballou phrased it—but they themselves had disappeared. Ballou slept that night in the camp which they had deserted. The further pursuit of his game required daylight.

With the dawn he was at work on hands and knees, identifying the tracks of the fugitives. He found them all; found the traces of two boats upon the bank instead of one, and traced the course of the horses for a hundred yards up the river. He then began to reason out the logical issues from his facts.

A good scout is a good logician. His premises found, he will work out the results in a manner to put to shame half the lawyers in the land. Ballou said:—

"Now, we have 'em again, certain. If we can only keep 'em now. What was they to do? Here was Willie Sinclair dashing down with a smart troop upon Orangeburg; another party up at Holly-Dale: there was no safety up or down for a matter of five miles. A party of four can't stop long, with an enemy's troop each side of 'em. They've dropped below, most of 'em, in the canoes, and gone down from ten to twenty miles. They've made a fetch round Orangeburg with the horses, and I reckon two men's carried them round, and two have gone down with the prisoners. They've just gone fur enough to be out of reach from a dash, and not too fur for the men that have the horses to get to them by daylight. That's not more than ten miles I reckon. Then they've landed on this side; for you see, they won't want to be crossing the horses to t'other side; there's no sense in taking such useless trouble; and then, it's natural sense and reason that Inglehardt will be for keeping this side, where he can soonest make Orangeburg, and be safest out

of the way of Coulter, ten miles below. They could drop down there in three hours easy. They've made their calculations. I reckon they cut loose three hours before daylight. They've got a day's start of me. Well! It's to be done. I must follow the horses, for a boat leaves so narrow a trail on the water that it's mighty hard to find it in hot weather—in hot weather."

And he took the track of the horses.

"Lord," said he, as he noted the course thus pursued by the fugitives, and how nigh it had taken them to Orangeburg—"Lord! if Willie Sinclair had only knowd what I know! How he could ha' gobbled 'em up—every mother's son of 'em. Only half a mile from the village, sneaking round, just, I reckon, when he was a gutting it! Oh! the blindness of these dragoon soldiers. They're fit for nothing but a charge—nothing but a charge."

And, soliloquizing at every half turn, our scout stole forward through swamp and thicket, never once losing the trail upon which he had fastened, until it led him into the deepest swamps of the river about ten miles below the village. As soon as he found the trail turning certainly down to the river, he sought out a close thicket and harbored his horse securely. The rest of his scrutiny in the precinct required to be pursued on foot. He had not once lost the trail. It led him to the river's edge. He saw where the two boats had left the measure of their prows upon the banks. He noted once more the footsteps of the party. But the camp was again deserted. The fugitives were vigilant. He followed their progress upward to the highland—saw where they had passed into the main road—one of the avenues from Charleston to the village—and where they were lost, utterly indistinguishable from the thousand tracks of horse, and mule, and cattle, man and beast, which makes of the route through a light soil in the piney regions, a mere sinuous stripe of sand, in which one impression with the help of the breeze rapidly effaces another. Inglehardt and his party were no doubt somewhere abroad in the world of space and swamp and forest, but where? Our scout no doubt summoned up the echoes to his soliloquy, but he did not look to them for his response. He had once more to look to his logic.

Meanwhile, let us look back, and endeavor to supply the de-

tails which our scout, with all his sagacity, could not altogether grasp in his conjectures with regard to the progress of the fugitives. When Inglehardt and his party were all safely landed on the opposite side of the river the night when they were so closely pressed by Sinclair's scouts, he at once called his companions into consultation. The result of this conversation, was to put their captives into their two boats—one having been found on the opposite shore. The father and son, equally ignorant of each other's condition were still kept apart, and placed in separate vessels. In one of these Inglehardt bestowed himself; the other was confided to Dick of Tophet. To the Trailer and Julius, the negro, were allotted the task of bringing down the horses. Armed each with a paddle, Inglehardt and Dick set their skiffs in motion. The labor was small, the paddle being used rather to guide than to work the vessels, the current propelling them downward at an average rate of four miles an hour. They reached a point agreed on, some time before the Trailer and his horses, landed themselves and their captives, the latter still kept separate, and suffered the boats to make their farther way down stream as they might. They housed themselves in a thicket, laid their captives in silence under separate trees, and stretched themselves out for rest if not for slumber. It was an hour after daylight before the Trailer made his appearance, with Julius and the horses.

It was with a stubborn silence, and the noble fortitude of a soldier, not unprepared for reverses, that Captain Travis bore up under his captivity, and during the long period of humiliation, when, no longer a free agent in any respect, kept in complete ignorance of any of the facts in his condition except his captivity, and capable of only imperfect conjectures as to his whereabouts—he was treated more like a bale of luggage than a human and intelligent being—lifted from boat to shore, from shore to boat, from boat to shore again, and tumbled carelessly from stalwart shoulders upon the ground to brood in silence upon his painful situation, his limbs all stiffened and sore from restraint, and his flesh irritated with the cords that threatened to cut into it. His pride suffered him to offer no remonstrance. His knowledge of his captors taught him that it would be idle. He had but to endure with all the philosophy and fortitude

within his command. He was sustained by the conviction which he felt, that, though he himself was a loser in the game, his enemy was yet foiled in his attempts upon his daughter, Rutledge, and Willie Sinclair. He exulted, in his bonds, at the idea that Inglehardt had experienced a mortifying defeat, with the loss of nearly all his troop. This conviction could not be a mistaken one. The stealthy progress of his captor, his isolation, want of means and followers, all led him to the true conclusion. So far, he was consoled; nay, held himself a gainer by the result, though he had lost his own point in the game. He did not yet know all!

The boy too, Henry Travis, was sustained beyond his strength and years, by the consciousness of the first development of his powers; by the pride of his incipient mannishness; by a resolute determination not to suffer his enemies to discern that his young heart was sore, and his young soul apprehensive. He tasked his thought momentarily to teach him how to endure bravely, and to defy his captors to the last. He was resolved to play the soldier in the captive.

But he felt his constraint in pain. His bonds hurt his limbs; his position fevered him; his sinews were not yet hardened for endurance, and his heart suffered in sympathy with his body. It required all his ambitious thoughts and courage to keep him from the displays of weakness which he felt; and when he happened to think of his mother, and her grief and apprehension, the tears rose into his eyes; his heart filled; he felt like choking with his sobs! But he choked them down. He would not have his enemy exult in his sufferings. He strove to think of Willie Sinclair and his hardihood, and his teachings; of his daring valor; the sweep of his great broadsword; and that fierce cry of exulting rage with which he led the charge against the enemy, the first that the boy had ever witnessed; and his young soul beat and bounded with the thought:—

“Oh! if Willie Sinclair would but come!” But this soon subsided to another that brought back all his weakness:—

“My poor mother! She does not know what has happened to me. She will think they have killed me. My poor, poor mother!”

He as little dreamed of his father's condition, so near him,

fettered like himself, as the father dreamed of his! And their strength to endure was in part due to their mutual ignorance.

And both slept in the brief hour that they lay beneath the trees on the banks of the river, while Inglehardt waited for the appearance of the Trailer with the horses. They slept from exhaustion. For that brief interval they forgot their pain and captivity. Their instincts never once taught them, that, not twenty feet apart, they lay opposite to each other.

Their captors were the first to awaken. It is possible that *they* had not slept at all. They were bustling about when Travis first opened his eyes. He saw Inglehardt coming up from the river where he had been bathing; he was only half dressed, and was rubbing head and face with a towel. Dick of Tophet was counting bullets from one hand to the other. They chatted together at a short distance from their captives.

Seeing but these, Captain Travis closed his eyes again as if to shut out a disagreeable prospect. But he soon reopened them on hearing a wild cry from the foot of the great red oak in front of him. He had raised his head to look around him. At that moment Henry Travis opened his eyes and gazed about the scene confusedly. His sense seemed to take in his situation slowly. He stared at his father with bewildering sensations, closed his eyes again, again opened them—then, as if he had finally grasped the fact fairly, he cried out in a voice of anguish,

“Oh! father, have they got you too?”

The father again raised his head, and made a desperate effort to raise himself up, writhed violently in his bonds, and sunk back. He could only murmur—

“My son! my son! Oh! God be merciful! My son! my son!”

The son again spoke:—

“Father! *are* you tied like me?”

The person addressed writhed once more in his bonds, making a powerful effort to free his arms.

“’Twon’t do, cappin,” said Dick of Tophet, jeeringly, as he drew nigh, “’twon’t do. The hitch is too good and the line too strong, for a small man. Ef you was a young Samson now, you might work through it; but you ain’t what you was twenty years ago, and I reckon you never was much in heft and

sinew. Better take it easily, for a plough-line is mighty cutting ef you works much agin it."

"Villain, why do you tie that child?" was the howl rather than the speech of the father.

"Child!" said Dick; "he's a blasted for'ard one, if he's a child; and leetle cocksparrow as he is, I reckon he tumbled more than one good fellow, with his d——d little shooting-irons yesterday. Child! Blast my daylights, ef he didn't come mighty nigh to knocking daylight out of my own eyes intirely yesterday."

"And if he had, 'twould have saved the rope a burden and a task hereafter. But where's your master—where's Inglehardt?—put him before me, that I may speak to his base soul touching the cruel usage of that boy."

"Good morning, Captain Travis," said Inglehardt in his quietest and mildest tones, now emerging from the rear—"I am glad to see you looking so bright this morning, after your fatigues of the night and the day before. When I reflect that you have had nothing to eat since yesterday at breakfast, and have been ever since in rather a constrained position, it is wonderful to me how elastic you appear. Excuse me that the necessities of the service have not suffered me to provide the necessary creature comforts. But you will forgive me when you learn that I need them quite as much as yourself. However, we shall shortly have a little breakfast, and that will put us in better condition for travel. That you have not suffered relieves me greatly. It is perfectly delightful to see how fresh you are this morning!"

"Inglehardt," said Travis, with hoarse and choking accents—"we are enemies, that I understand; I am in your power. For myself, I have no plea to make, no prayer to offer; but why have you made a prisoner of that boy—that mere child—torn him from his mother—roped his little limbs, like a felon?"

"Child! Rather a stout child, Travis, and shoots a pistol like a buccaneer. You disparage the son of your loins—your first-born!"

"He is a child—but fifteen! Release him, Inglehardt—let him go to his mother. As a man you should feel shame

only in subjecting him to such treatment. Of what use keep him. I pledge myself that he will return quietly to his mother. For myself, I ask nothing. I submit to my fate."

"It is verily a good spirit—that of resignation, and the more you exercise it, Travis, the better. You are in a bad way. You played bravely, fearlessly, and with excellent skill. You have lost, and the stakes are forfeited. Your life was on the game, Travis!"

"No matter about my life! The boy! the boy! He has played no such game. He has incurred no such penalties. Release him—send him home. It is the shame of manhood that his tender limbs are thus corded."

"You mistake, Travis. He, too, has had his game—has probably the life of one or more men to answer for. *His* stakes are also forfeit; but these do not involve his life. He must undergo the fate of all prisoners—must wait exchange. But, farther, he is no prisoner of mine. Mr. Andrews, there, is his captor."

"Pshaw! You do not mean to impose upon me the silly idea that the private of a troop exercises a discretion on such a subject independently of his superior?"

"You may believe what you please. It is enough to repeat that Mr. Andrews is not in my troop, and exercises his own discretion in his adventures. His accountability is elsewhere. The boy is his prisoner."

"Ay, but you can move him, Inglehardt, to do *your* pleasure rather than his own."

"Humph! perhaps; but I see not that the claims of Captain Travis, or any of his family, are sufficiently strong to make it my pleasure to gratify their wishes."

"Good God! Inglehardt," said the other, now beginning to comprehend his enemy, "can it be that you look to the detention of that child as one of the means by which to gratify your purposes?"

"Oh! my dear Captain Travis, my purposes are all very innocent. I trust to make it equally your pleasure and policy to see that they are gratified."

"Great God! have I lived for this? My boy! my boy!"

Such was the ejaculation, hoarse and convulsive, of the fa-

ther, as, half-crawling and half-rolling, both arms and legs being tightly corded, the boy scrambled over the space that separated the two, and flung himself moaning into his father's lap. No clasp—no embrace—no caresses, awaited him. The limbs of Travis were as tightly fettered as his own; but he stooped over, and pressed his lips upon the cheeks and forehead of the boy, then burst into a sobbing convulsion. The hard man was terribly softened. Dick of Tophet looked inquiringly at Inglehardt. The latter smiled faintly and turned away, walking silently out toward the high ground. The ruffian followed him, after a brief pause, with hurried steps, and the two conferred together out of hearing of the captives.

"I say, cappin," began Joel Andrews—"I reckon there's no use in keeping the boy, since you've got the father. He's only a trouble, and always in the way."

"Eh? what? No use! My good fellow, you have no idea of the uses of useless things. We'll make him very useful."

"I don't see how, cappin."

"Eh! you don't? You will open your eyes to a discovery then before very long. Why, man, don't you already see how the father softens? Before he saw the boy he was stubborn as a rock: now he melts and flows like running water."

"But what's the use of his melting to us? We've got him, and kin always manage to make his rock melt—"

"Ay, so long as we keep the son. Enough, Dick; you seem wonderfully disposed to melt yourself. But we can't afford it, Dick. We must keep all our captives, big and little. They are so much capital for both of us. It'll make the boy strong and hardy to give him a little training as a prisoner; and you see he wishes to be a soldier. No school like adversity for that, Dick. As for the father—d—n him!—the melting process must begin now or never. We can not manage him-else. I tell you, we must coin his heart up, drop by drop—all the blood in it—till we bring him to a sensible condition. Through that boy we subdue him. His ransom will pay you well; the father's will pay me. You shall know hereafter how we shall manage it."

Dick of Tophet still looked inquiringly, but his superior seemed nowise disposed to continue the subject. It was not

often that Inglehardt permitted himself to swear, and the fact of his having done so, struck the ruffian with some surprise. He could now perceive that there were mixed motives and emotions at work prompting Inglehardt to measures, in respect to the two captives, for which he could not definitely account. Dick of Tophet turned back to the prisoners, between whom, meanwhile, a long and touching conversation had taken place, which the approach of the ruffian interrupted. But he, appearing to see this, continued his walk to the river, and the two resumed their speech. The boy had given his father a full account, as far as he had arrived at the particulars, of all that had taken place at Holly-Dale. There was much that he did not know, but he could speak positively of the general result of the affair. Old Travis was confirmed in his belief that Inglehardt had been defeated, and that Rutledge and Sinclair had not only escaped the snare, but had turned the petard of the tory-captain upon himself.

"And, oh! father, if you could have seen how we made 'em skip. You should have seen *our* charge! How we came down upon 'em, and scattered them every way! They've got us, it's true, but that's all! I don't think that Inglehardt's got half a dozen men left. The dragoons of Willie Sinclair cut 'em down, right and left, just as the hurricane throws the trees."

"Oh! my son, you forget that Inglehardt has a full corps of mounted-riflemen now in Rawdon's army. They'll be down before long, and then he'll be stronger than ever."

"But they'll have to exchange us, father. Willie Sinclair will see to that. He's got enough of the tories in his hands to exchange for us a dozen times over."

Travis shook his head despondingly. He saw what the boy could not. He rightly conjectured the policy of the tory-captain, and was about to deliver it, when he reflected that it would only serve unnecessarily to dishearten the child, and add the anxieties of a new doubt to a condition already sufficiently depressing. The tearful eyes of the boy looking up into his own, the tremulous eagerness of his lip, the soft, girl-ish delicacy of his cheek, its peachy hue—all expressive of innocence and gentleness, such as we seek to protect from harsh

encounter and biting winds—made the father careful to sustain and encourage rather than depress his hope, and he said:—

“Yes, Henry, there can be no question but that Willie Sinclair will soon relieve us. But you must now take your real lessons as a soldier. You must expect some trials of your strength and courage. Be of good cheer, and do not suffer anything you see or hear to alarm you. We are in rough hands, and it is one of the arts of such people to overcome the souls of their captives—their principles—through their fears. Keep a stout heart, and bear manfully your troubles.”

“Oh! father, if you had seen me when we made the rush on them fellows! Why, when I heard the bugle sound, and the cry of our lieutenant to charge, I had no more fear—I thought only how to get a-head of the rest.”

“Ah! my son, it is easier to face an enemy, with the bugles blowing in one’s ears than to endure bonds. The charge warms the blood, but cords and chains chill and enfeeble it.”

“Yes, indeed! Oh! my father. I never felt how sweet freedom was, till these cords were on my wrists and legs!”

The approaching tramp of horses silenced the conversation. Anon, Dick of Tophet was seen speeding up from the river. He joined Inglehardt on the higher land, where he was awaiting the Trailer and Julius who soon appeared through the trees bringing the horses. He brought a basket of provisions, baked biscuit of corn, the fragment of a boiled ham, and half-a-dozen eggs, boiled hard, with a morsel of salt in a paper. These he had picked up somewhere on the route, at the house of some friendly tory. It is just probable that the *prog* may have been stolen from the cupboard of some doubtful patriot.

It was no intention of Inglehardt to starve his captives. A portion of the breakfast was assigned them, and the cords were taken from their hands while they ate.

“Eat, Henry,” said the father, seeing the boy disinclined, “a good stomach is necessary to a captive. Eat! you will need all your strength.”

And he set the boy an example of good trencher service. While they ate, Julius, the negro-boy, stood watching them from a little distance. The runaway felt some twinges of conscience at beholding them. They both saw him, but as if by

tacit understanding, they made no remark. When the repast was over, and the horses made ready for a new start—Dick of Tophet said, with an air of ruffianly indifference:—

“I reckon, cappin, we needn’t cord up the prisoners, ef so be they’ll only give their word of honor, that they won’t try to git off.”

But Inglehardt preferred the security of cords to words. He did not, however, answer the suggestion in the hearing of the captives. There was a feeling of shame, perhaps, that made him silent. Apart from them, he replied to Andrews:—

“We must risk nothing. Travis is a sly rascal. He won’t feel bound by any pledges to us. He’ll argue that we have no right to exact them. Besides, Dick, we’ve got to melt the rock you remember. To bring Travis to the right condition of mind. I must make him very fearful. I must bring him to his knees through his terrors.”

“But the boy—”

“It is only through the boy that we can work upon the father’s terrors. He has no fears for himself. We must make him fearful for the boy. Remember that, Dick. You must second me in waking up his fears.”

Dick of Tophet, ruffian as he was, was a little at a loss to see how this was to be done; but he was not willing that his superior should suppose him inexperienced and ignorant.

“Oh! very well. Only jest you say what’s got to be done. That’s all.”

“At present, we have only got to secure them on horseback. Mount them with free legs and then tie the legs fast under the belly of the horse. We can guide the horses for them.”

And in this fashion the two captives were mounted. Travis expostulated in behalf of his son; pledged himself that the boy would not attempt escape, but he was not listened to. Inglehardt rode on a-head. It was in vain that the commissary demanded an interview with his old associate.

They were gone from the scene, as we are already aware, when, conducted by his unerring instincts, or, rather, the unerring logic of the scout, Jim Ballou came upon the ground. He tracked the party, as we have seen, up to the point where they passed from the woods into the main road. Here the

tracks were all lost, in the wilderness of impressions, made by every beast that runs, upon the sandy thoroughfare. But Jim Ballou proceeded to work out his usual scout logic.

"They're not going to keep this main track," he soliloquized in a murmur as he looked about him. "They're for hiding, and they've just crossed the road to get into the lower woods. Well, we'll see, but I reckon they're quite too old at foxing to go right across, making but one step from the old track into the new one."

And our scout was right. His search directly across the road yielded him no discovery.

"As I thought," said he. "No, they've kept the road a bit, up or down, only to break off the connection. They've gone across, that's certain, for if that wasn't their plan, they needn't ha' come out of the swamp thicket to the road at all. They'd ha' just pushed on, up or down, in the same old woods. Yet here's their track to the very edge of the road. Well, it's certain they've gone across, and it's up or down. And it only needs keen sighting on t'other side, for a matter of fifty yards, more or less, to see where they come out. For they wouldn't keep the main track a minute longer than needful."

So he reasoned. His own horse was still hidden in the thicket. He was careful not to suffer his own tracks to mar those which he sought. He stepped the road carefully up and down its lower margin. Nothing escaped his eyes. They were those of one who riding at a canter through the woods will stop his horse and show you the track of deer or turkey among the leaves, and tell you just how many hours have elapsed since the animal made it. His reasoning was so nearly certain that he had no doubts of finding the trail. After a while, a low chuckle escaped him, and he raised himself erect.

"Have 'em again! I knowed it must be so. And now to find all the tracks, and see if any of 'em has broke off from the party."

And for this further object, he again addressed himself to the trail.

"All right! all together. And now for the general course."

He followed the track for a hundred yards into the woods; then, as if satisfied, he took his way back carelessly to where

his horse had been fastened. He slipped the bridle and let the animal graze. While the horse was thus employed, the scout drew from across his saddle a small buckskin sack, with two pouches, one on either side. From one of these pouches he drew a smaller sack containing a dry grainy sort of meal a few handfuls of which he swallowed. His food was a simple meal of maize and sugar, browned together over the fire, one part sugar to eight of meal. A draft from the pure sweet waters of the Edisto, swallowed with mouth buried in the running stream, which he could thus reach only by prostrating himself upon his breast with his hands grasping the roots of trees jutting from the banks into the water, satisfied his thirst; and our scout was ready to pursue the trail which he had found. But he did not immediately set off. He returned to the spot where his steed had been left to graze and seated himself quietly beneath a tree to ruminate, or sleep. For two hours he kept this position seeming to drowse, and perhaps really drowsing. At the end of this time, quietly rising up, just as if he had arranged for two hours' sleep, and could will at pleasure the duration of his slumbers, he proceeded to bit the animal and mount. A few moments after this he was in motion, taking the trail of Inglehardt's party, deep in the forests, and pushing in a southeasterly direction. We need not follow him for the present. Enough that the beagle was on the track, with the scent keen and warm, and that, if any scout can fairly keep the trail of the tory and his captives, Jim Ballou is the man to do so. The great forests soon swallowed him and them from sight.

CHAPTER XLI.

SKRIMMAGING.

VERY soon after Sinclair had left Holly-Dale—as soon after as possible—the great cumbersome family carriage of Mrs. Travis was got in readiness, and that lady and Bertha prepared to depart from the well-known and familiar places, seeking temporary refuge across the Santee. Four fine blooded bays were harnessed to the coach, which was required to bear the two ladies, the servant-maid, and the one-eyed driver, Cato. The name of the old Roman, who never distinguished himself as a *whip*, but might reasonably assert some distinctions for himself, of another sort, was yet hardly misapplied in the case of our Cato, who, very certainly had been a famous Jehu in better days. He was the only *family* negro whom Travis, as a *novus homo* could claim. He had inherited Cato in right of his wife, and, as an old family negro, the fellow was held to be faithful. This was the usual characteristic of the class. It was the “*new negro*”—the African fresh from the coast, whom it was found good policy always to distrust. Cato was not simply faithful. He was sternly and bravely so. He was fearless in the assertion of the rights of his “young missis,” by which title he continued to recognise the mother of Bertha, long after the latter had entered her teens. To both, and to his master, Cato never hesitated to offer his opinions, and if necessary, his rebuke. As if conscious of his integrity and of its recognition in the family, he asserted his moral rights under it, and was just as frequently guardian and censor, in his province, as body-servant or carriage-driver.

Captain St. Julien readily comprehended the character of Cato in his first conversation with him; and a judicious understanding between the parties, at the commencement of the

journey, contemplated all the possible dangers that might happen along the route. With so many divisions of the enemy approaching the very precincts, through which the cavalcade was to pass, they might reasonably apprehend some encounters with a foe whom it was their policy to avoid.

The auspices were seemingly quite favorable when the party set forth. They crossed the Edisto at Shilling's, and soon began to press downward, inclining in toward Orangeburg, until the Caw-caw swamp should be passed, when it was the policy of St. Julien to give the village a pretty wide berth to the right, in order to escape the danger of contact with Stewart and his regiment, who were now known to be pushing up with all possible speed to the junction with Rawdon. This danger once passed, the farther progress was to be pursued along the road running across the head of the "Four-Holes," and intersecting one of the two roads leading down the country, parallel to the course of the Santee, until they should be able to strike direct for Nelson's Ferry. Once in this road, which was supposed to be in possession of Marion's parties, the progress was considered safe.

Such was the arrangement. But it was subject to contingencies. When St. Julien, timing his movements to those of the lumbering carriage of the family, was approaching the lowest of the routes across the Caw-caw, one of his scouts rode in and gave intelligence of a considerable body of the enemy's horse on the other side. It became necessary to pursue, for the present, a route along the upper margin of the Caw-caw, keeping that stream and swamp between themselves and the unknown enemy. In sooth, our little party had a very narrow strait—almost as narrow as that bridge, Al Sirat, of the Mus-sulman's, which conducts to heaven—by which to pass through the converging masses of the British. There was Rawdon from above, soured by sickness, irritated by the hot weather, vexed at the failure of Stewart to join him at Granby, and altogether in very bad temper, with the world generally, and his Irish troops in particular, pressing down from Granby along the eastern side of the North Edisto; Cruger, embarrassed by the fugitive colonies of the Nine-Six loyalists, and followed closely by Pickens, seeking a junction with Rawdon, as the

only means of making himself safe; Stewart, with his regiment of buffs, and a large convoy of provisions and munitions, goading on his teams the nearest road from Charleston; and sundry scattered bodies of tories who had been busy as forayers, while Greene and Rawdon were playing for heavier stakes above.

Well might St. Julien, with his little squad of twenty-five troopers, and his burdensome coach of state with its precious inmates, feel the necessity of taking every possible precaution, in order to escape being ground to powder between the several masses then tending to a common centre. Yet, had he known! The formidable troop, from which, misled by his scout, he thought it necessary to skulk, consisted of a detachment of Marion's command, just despatched by Greene with the hope of intercepting Stewart and his convoy. Under the cover of the four hundred mounted men, whom the famous partisan led on this expedition, St. Julien might have made a safe progress, fourteen or fifteen miles; since all the country east of Stewart's route, and below the Caw-caw, was now fairly under cover of his rifles. Leaving St. Julien to his obscure road, we will take that pursued by Marion.

It was on the 6th of July that Greene succeeded in passing Lord Rawdon. Reserving to himself a single company of Washington's cavalry, simply to watch the progress of the British army, Greene despatched Marion on the expedition against Stewart. Marion kept himself usually well-informed. On the 7th of July, his scouts apprized him of the approach of Stewart, who was totally unconscious of an enemy. At midnight of the same day, Marion sallied out from his covert confident of the prey which seemed gliding fairly into his jaws, even as the fly walks into the open mouth of the crocodile. But, for once, his scouts were premature—had made themselves too secure of fortune. They had tracked the enemy to the door of the trap, but never once seemed to fancy that he might turn aside at the entrance. They had made no provision against the very event which happened. At the last moment, Stewart had a choice of roads, and influenced only by the condition of the roads themselves, and totally unapprehensive of any foe, the British colonel simply took the route which Marion

did not cover; and while the partisan swept down for his destruction along the one route, Stewart made his way upward in safety by the other. Not altogether in safety, for a dash of one of Marion's squadrons, recovering lost ground, succeeded in cutting off the rear guard, with a portion of the convoy. Stewart, himself, with the main body of his troop, entered Orangeburg on the morning of the 8th, hardly yet conscious of the danger he had escaped.

While these events were in progress, St. Julien moved forward slowly, and with great precaution. He kept his scouting parties considerably in advance. He had been some three hours only on the road, after leaving Holly-Dale, when his scouts rode in with tidings of a second British party only a mile off, consisting of some thirty men. They were reported to be putting their horses in motion; but, of their course, nothing was known. It was just possible that they might be pursuing another route; possible, that they might not cross his path. It was, perhaps, easy for him to elude them. But it was well to know who they were. They were at present in his way. They were but thirty in number, and his force was twenty-five. St. Julien resolved in a single instant. He was the quietest person in the world, but the most decisive. He drew his lieutenant aside, gave him brief directions in a whisper, then watched him quietly for awhile, as he divided the command into two parts, and led them forward slowly, leaving but four troopers to follow with their captain. The squads thus moving off turned slowly into the woods on the upper side of the road, and very soon disappeared from sight.

As soon as St. Julien had seen them disappear, he rode up to the side of the carriage, and with a pleasant smile upon his lips, and a courtier-like bow, he said:—

“We are possibly to have a brush with the enemy. Our scouts report a squad of Tories on the route ahead. It is needful that I should look after them. But this need not alarm you, ladies. Do not be uneasy. I make no doubt we shall readily disperse them; but, whatever the event, I have given Cato instructions what to do. He seems firm and intelligent, and should any disaster befall my command, you had better trust him implicitly.”

"But will you have to fight, Captain St. Julien?" demanded Mrs. Travis, in faltering tones.

"It is very probable," was the reply.

"But, captain, could it not be avoided?"

St. Julien's face slightly reddened.

"It might! The thing is surely possible. It only needs that I should forget myself, my duty, my name, my orders, and take to flight; in which event, while I should get off safely, your carriage and party would probably fall into the hands of the pursuers."

"Nay, captain, do not mistake me. I should be the last person to desire, even for my safety, that you should do anything discreditable to manhood: and you will please remember, besides, that it is a woman who speaks, whose feminine fears must not weigh against a soldier's judgment. My only thought was that—that—really, I see, that what I would say now amounts only to what I said before—that it seems *our* best policy to avoid encounter. If we could elude the enemy——"

"Such would be *your* policy, my dear madam, and if my only duty was your escort, I should seek only your safety, at any sacrifice. But you will remember that my military duties are paramount. It is only an incidental service which keeps me beside your carriage for a while. It would not be proper for me to evade or to seek to evade any reasonable chance of striking the enemy, even though at some peril to your escort. But, in truth, we have no choice. The enemy is before us, in no great strength—in numbers hardly beyond our own. We can not pass him without a meeting. If we attempt to cross the Caw-caw, we risk the encounter with Stewart; and you have been already advised of the enemy's presence in force at the lower crossing. To turn back upon our own steps, is perhaps quite as great a danger, as we know that Rawdon is pressing down from above, and can not now be far off. You see, my dear madam, that our best policy is to seek to brush the feebler enemy from our path in front, and to delay as little in doing so as possible. Good morning, Mrs. Travis. Good morning, Miss Bertha. By the way, Miss Bertha, you may find some very pretty wild flowers in this wood. Just take your course downward for the swamp, as soon as Cato stops the carriage. He

will drive into the lower woods, so as to keep from sight of the road. A little ramble will relieve your limbs for a season. In these piney woods, where they slope down to the *bays*, you will find a great variety of flowers, and I should be pleased, on my return, to see you with a handsome bouquet. Here, at this very season, you will find the yellow orchis, which is a pretty country damsel; the passion flower may be gathered where the woods are most open; its carnation contrasts beautifully with the blue pulchra; throw a few sprigs of sensitive plant between them; and then sprinkle the white azalea around and about the cluster; the garden-shrub grows wild in all this region; the brilliant silk weed, with its rich blood tints, and the cardinal flower, will wonderfully help your variety; the yellow and purple saracenia, and the blue flag, you will gather along the swamp, but look out for snakes where you seek for these. There is a dragon that always watches over Beauty. Don't forget the "wake robbin," and the "old man's beard," the leafy green look of the one, and the snow-white fringes of the other, will greatly help the contrasts; and if you will make your girl gather you a single pond lily from the bay, for the centre of your group, you will have as beautiful a bouquet as Marie Antoinette would be proud to plant upon her toilet. Pardon me that I am not suffered to join with you in the search. I am passionately fond of flowers. I half believe them to be fallen angels—particularly these odorless wild flowers. By the way, do you know why they are so odorless and so beautiful, Miss Bertha?"

"No, indeed! Why? I am curious for the reason."

"Because they are designed as field and wayside flowers only, and thus address themselves only to the passing eye—meant only for the sight, to cheer the traveller, not to delay him—and this reminds me that I have no time to lose"—taking out his watch. "Good morning, ladies, and a pleasant ramble. Cato!"

"Sah! cappin!"

"Remember, Cato, what I have told you."

"Nebber you f'aid [afraid] cappin! I onderstands. I do wha' you tells me. He done! I say 'em!"

Cato waved his whip, and nodded his head with the air of

a man who *would* round his periods conclusively. But St. Julien waited for no answer. With a smile and bow to the ladies, and a finger lifted to Cato, he bent forward on his charger, gave him the spur, and followed the route which his lieutenant had pursued. He overtook his troopers as they worked forward, silent as serpents, trailing through the woods.

Not a bugle sounded; not a voice spoke above a whisper; but quietly gliding from officer to officer and man to man, St. Julien whispered the necessary orders and encouragement to all. He aimed to surprise his enemy; an achievement which he thought easy enough, after the report made by his scouts. And he proceeded to this sort of business with the same calm, subdued, and gentle manner, with which he had counselled the young damsel of the wild flowers of the region and how best to compose them into a bouquet.

"Ha!" said Cato, "he hab 'trong sense for sodger, dat same slim cappin. He no hab black eye and leetle mout' for not'ing. I see de debbil in he eye, for all he talk so softly and small jes' like a gal. He no gib too much tongue. You no yer [hear] bugle blow. He hush 'em up. He's for ambushment fight, I tell you. He guine 'trike jes' like rattlesnake!"

"But what are *we* to do, Cato?" demanded his mistress.

"Enty de cappin, he'se'f, tell you Cato is know? Nebber you min'. Jes' leff it all to me, young missis."

"But, Cato, I should like to know something too. What is there secret in these instructions of Captain St. Julien?"

"Hegh! Da's jes' like ooman's! He mus' be knowing to ebbry t'ing. Wha' good he guine do you for know? De cappin know, Cato know:—Wha' den? You guine alter wha' de cappin say?"

"No, Cato, but I would like to know what it is."

"You know soon 'nough, when you see what Cato guine done."

And no further answer would the fellow vouchsafe, as he wheeled his horses to the right and drove them down toward the swamp, and sufficiently far into the thicket to conceal the vehicle from any wayfarers along the road.

"Der you is—all safe!" cried the negro, as he held up his horses. "Reckon dem tory nebber can see we yer from de

road. Ef he want for fin' we, he mus' put he nose down to de groun' and run' in. An' now, you yerry wha' de cappin bin tell you. Git out ef you wants to, and 'tretch you limb, and pick de yaller flowers ob de forest. Ha! he's a berry 'trange sawt o' pusson, dat cappin; jes' he guine fight wid broadsword and pistol, he tell we 'bout de flowers ob de forest, and whay for look for 'em, and all dem 'ting wid big name. And jes' wid he mout' full ob flowers, he guine cut down de hossman and de hosses, and shoot de people as he run!''

And the ladies descended from the carriage, and began to look about for flowers, when suddenly there was a sharp blare of the bugle, and then a confused sound, a strange hum, as of numerous insects, rising rapidly into the uproar, the clash and clang of a very spirited combat, hand to hand and *a l'outrance*.

St. Julien's broadswords were soon at breakfast, their teeth meeting in the flesh.

He was deliberate—very much so—as a man of action; but he consumed very little time in his deliberations. It was only to possess himself of all the facts in the case, as gatherable from his scouts, that he drew rein for a brief moment in the wood.

The enemy were to be surprised. They were in possession of an old mill-seat, on the Caw-caw. They were scattered along a narrow causeway. They had breakfasted, and whiskey had been their substitute for coffee. They were refreshed, and, something more, exhilarated—never once dreaming of an enemy so near them. On the contrary, under the lead of a notorious Florida outlaw, one Lem Watkins, after a season of foray on the South Edisto and Savannah, they were preparing to unite themselves with the main army, and to share in its expected spoils. Their horses stood ready bitted, saddled and bridled for a start. Some were fastened to branches of trees upon the roadside; others might be seen upon the causeway leading to the mill; Watkins himself, with a group, was taking a stirrup-cup, just above the stream itself, which happened to be quite low and fordable. A dozen of them were in the saddle, when, these details all previously ascertained by the scouts of St. Julien, and his troop having worked their way down under cover of the woods until concealment was no longer possible, he

gave the signal, and his bugle rolled out the sharp blasts which sounded to the charge.

Then rose the wild hurrah, the savage whoop! and the dragoons thundered down upon the enemy. The Tories, who were dismounted, rushed for their horses. Those who were mounted dashed forward along the causeway down into the swamp. Watkins dropped his bottle of whiskey into the stream, and scrambled across it to the opposite bank where his horse was fastened. Here he mounted, and wound his bugle, and shouted to his troopers to show front and not be ridden down. They might have done so; since the causeway, for a space, was but of wagon-width, and might have been held against thrice the number of foes, by the half-dozen troopers who would have covered it. On each side the ground was mucky and fenny. But a surprise is apt to prevent all mental calculations.

The Tories made two or three shows, wheeling about and displaying a front to their assailants. But the charge was too rapid—too headlong, and so, irresistible. To keep ahead, to dash across the causeway and stream, and find cover in the opposite woods, seemed the common impulse of the fugitives, and a fair proportion of them succeeded in doing so—those who perished along the route under St. Julien's sabres, just offering sufficient impediment to delay the onslaught for the safety of the rest. But once was there anything like a conflict. Three brave fellows planted themselves in the middle of the causeway, emptied their pistols into the faces of half a score of the dragoons, tumbled one of them from his saddle, crossed swords with the rest, and were hurled out of the track, ridden down, tumbled from the causeway, and cut to pieces before they could rise.

Quarter was neither asked nor given. The work with them was short. They had been guilty of the blunder of receiving the charge at a halt, instead of setting their own steeds in motion. The momentum of the shock was irresistible. But they embarrassed the charge, delayed it, and two thirds of their comrades, running pellmèll, succeeded in getting over the swamp.

The proportion was too great to be allowed to escape. Our dragoons were just enough heated to make a chase agreeable, and where an enemy might go, a brave foe might surely follow.

St. Julien dashed after them.

Watkins made a rally. But the showing was a false one. It was but for a moment. With the near rush of the dragoons, the tories broke incontinently, and made for the open woods; the pursuers after them, occasionally smiting as they went, shearing off head or arm of the unhappy fugitive whose hope rested upon the legs of a beast wanting the necessary sinews.

The open woods are reached, but offer no security—nay, afford better chances to the dragoons, who are all well mounted, and on powerful, large animals. It was now that the sword began to glean its victims. Watkins, himself, was closely pursued by St. Julien. A small group, less than a score, held on with him. They were nearing the open road. This tended to lessen their chances of safety.

“Why not surrender and get quarter?” said the lieutenant of Watkins, as they ran side by side.

“Ha! and what the good of that? If not the broadsword, it is the gallows!”

Very true! Every mother’s son of them was an outlaw.

Breathless, headlong they rushed out into the open road, and whirled their steeds upward. Not twenty yards behind them, swept St. Julien forward with his whole squadron, *minus* two men only and three horses. In another moment, the fugitives are lost—just so soon as the pursuers find themselves on the open track! But, even as Watkins gains the road, he shouts, yells with a sense of relief, gives his steed new spurs—lashes the sides of the beast with repeated rowels—and the others do the same. Headlong the beasts go, over and over, rolling in the sand. St. Julien dashes out upon them, with all his squadron, ready to reap the field!

He is disappointed of the prey. His uplifted sabre is arrested. He gathers up his steed with a sudden curb that staggers the beast. He prepares to wheel—to fly in turn.

He is in the immediate presence of the whole British army of Rawdon! Watkins, with his beast, has rolled over at the very feet of the British van! His neck is not broken, and he has, this time, escaped the keen edge of the partisan’s sabre.

The British drums beat the alarm lively.

“What is this?” cried Rawdon, galloping to the head of his

column. But nobody could explain. The army was prepared for battle, the artillery unlimbered and hurried up to the front ; the wearied regiments, marching in loose order up to this moment, and no small disarray, were made to change front, and prepare for attack. The British general, one of the ablest, by the way, in the service, had no reason to doubt that Greene's whole army was at hand. He knew that he was pursued. He knew that Greene, himself, with a strong force of mounted men, had actually passed him ; and he might well suppose that a forced march like his own, by a people accustomed to the climate and so strong in cavalry, had proved them better able to endure so heavy a strain upon their strength and sinews, than his European troops, so many of whom were fresh from Ireland. Besides, the country was one highly favorable for surprises. So dense were the forests, so deep the swamps, so sinuous the routes, that two armies might sometimes pitch their tents within a mile of each other, and, unless provided with excellent scouts, might never suspect their mutual proximity until too late.

Rawdon was feeble in cavalry. He had none in fact ; his only body of horse having been cut up completely, at Granby, not a week before, by a detachment from Lee's legion. To supply his deficiency, in this most necessary arm of war, in a plain and sparsely-settled country like Carolina, a body of volunteer gentry, his own staff, the field-officers, and some few loyalists—in all something less than a hundred men—had organized themselves for cavalry service on this march, and with reference to the very sort of danger which now appeared to threaten them. The corps was led by Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

This gallant young nobleman, for whom so melancholy a fate was in reserve, to be developed in future histories, soon led his charge against St. Julien. He had been operating on the flanks and rear—it being supposed that the American army was still behind them.

The troop was not an efficient one. It was badly mounted in the first place ; and one half of them carried small-swords. It was motley in equipment, and few of them had enjoyed any advantages, of drill or training, in the present form and organ-

ization of the troop. Nevertheless, it was still too strong, numbering some ninety men, to suffer St. Julien to risk the issue, in the very face of the British army. To keep up a good front, and claw off quietly from the game, was the policy of St. Julien. But would the enemy suffer this? With their infantry to back them, there was hardly a hope of it. But, as this was all of cavalry that the British army could command, it was no part of their policy that it should venture far from the main body in pursuit. Rawdon was particular in his injunctions to this effect. He knew not but that St. Julien's troop was employed as a decoy. Still, it was needful to brush the assailants from his path; and the dashing young Irishman, who had volunteered to head this command, darted out, at a smart gallop, upon our partisans.

St. Julien readily conceived the British policy, and this necessarily counselled his own. He could not successfully maintain the assault of Fitzgerald, and the latter could not venture to pursue him far. His game lay in the heels of his horses. He wheeled about accordingly, the moment that he made the discovery of his enemy in force, sounded his bugle for the retreat, and sent his men a-head—down the road toward Orangeburg. It was impossible under the press of the enemy to recross the Caw-caw.

Then followed the chase, continued for a mile down the road. St. Julien felt that he could always take the measure of his pursuers' feet. He had very much the best horses. He did not urge his beasts. Looking back, from time to time, he saw that the pursuing force was scattered—the better mounted were considerably a-head of the rest—leaving the party in advance very little more numerous than his own. He kept his troop in hand, ready for the moment.

When Turkey creek was passed, he sounded the rally, wheeled about, gave his steed the goad, and dashed on to the embrace of sabres. His steel crossed with that of Fitzgerald. The shock of the two parties was fierce and the strife sharp. It lasted, however, but a moment. Soon the whole force of the British cavalry pressed up to the *melée*, and the retreat was once more resumed. A few saddles on both sides had been emptied in the brief discussion, and the two captains had pretty well warmed with their gallant passage-at-arms.

Fitzgerald felt that his foe could leave him at any moment, and he taunted him with a fling at his chivalry. St. Julien only smiled as he answered :—

“ Another time, my lord. You hold the pledge of Peyre St. Julien that he will not always fly.”

“ Peyre St. Julien ! Ah ! ha ! That is the gallant of Carrie Sinclair !” And with the recollection, his lordship urged even more keenly the pursuit than before. He now had a personal feeling in the matter.

It was not St. Julien's policy to be driven into Orangeburg, where he might find his hands full, with Stuart's buffs and Coffin's cavalry, fresh from the city. Nor was it his game to venture below that place, with the chance of meeting this force on the road ; and, very soon there would be small choice of roads, two only offering, one obliquing in an eastern direction, and running sinuously from the village to the Santee, heading the Four-holes swamp ; the other crossing the Caw-caw a mile from the village, being the very route which he had designed to pursue, but from which he had been diverted by the tidings, brought by his scouts, of a large body of mounted men. That body of mounted men too, lay between him and all these points, unless they had changed their ground in the last few hours. But he was necessarily compelled to reason and to act as if they still were in his path. He was thus between two or more enemies. Unless he could strike into the woods, and cut directly across the country, he was in danger of falling, one side or the other, into the meshes of a more powerful foe. The shortest course, and boldest, was still the best.

He must try and cripple his immediate pursuer, and so disable him, as to be able to take the woods without risking pursuit from this one source of annoyance.

Done—attempted rather—almost as soon as resolved upon.

Again, the eagerness of the pursuit had divided the force of the pursuers.

St. Julien timed his performances, with a due regard to this circumstance. Again, at a given signal, he wheeled about, brought his troop to the charge, and spurred forward, *a bride abattue*, and with such a shout from the lungs of all, as betrayed the resolution for a most desperate trial of strength.

The shock was beautifully given, and manfully borne. But Fitzgerald himself went down before it, his horse reeling, and finally rolling over him. The clash and clatter of the sabre followed, sounds like the tinkering of a thousand kettles, and ugly cuts were given and taken, and more than one saddle emptied. The foremost squad of Fitzgerald—he himself—was nearly lost, when his rear came up in separate bodies each producing its effect upon the field. The young Irish lord, bruised only, recovered his legs and saddle. A few more mounted men galloped up from Rawdon's army; others were beginning to appear; the enemy was increasing, and St. Julien was forced once more to show his back to the pursuers.

They pressed him closely. His troop was much more jaded than the enemy. His several charges, upon the tories first, and subsequently upon the force of Fitzgerald, began to tell upon his horses, while his pursuers, on the other hand, their movements timed to those of a fagged and exhausted infantry, were comparatively fresh.

The flight began to falter; the chase increased in earnestness. The parties were now but a mile from Orangeburg, and again they mingled in pell-mell conflict.

It was now forced upon the partisans against their desires. The game became serious. St. Julien was hardly pressed, and several of his men were down. The whole of the mounted force of the British, numbering ninety men or more, had reached the field of strife, and, for half-a-mile, along the main road, the conflict was going on among the separated groups.

"Yield, Captain St. Julien, and have good terms," cried Fitzgerald approaching him.

"It will be time enough for that hereafter," was the reply of St. Julien. The swords of the two again crossed. It was quick work. Both were good swordsmen; both good riders; both of similar build, and probably the same degree of strength.

One, two, three!—

Cut!—point!—

How beautifully the sabres flashed, clashed, clove together and recoiled.

But, suddenly, the champions were dashed asunder. Wave after wave rolled in between them. The stunning blare from

twenty bugles—the stunning shouts from five hundred great stentorian throats—startled all the echoes of Caw-caw! Fitzgerald, he knew not how, found himself suddenly in full flight, followed close by all his troopers;—his fine, painted volunteer cavalry—his handsome painted knights—with scarlet coats, flaring feathers, and any quantity of gold lace and crimson sashes, were driving wildly a-head, *sauve qui peut*, sounding in the ear of every instinct.

Fitzgerald was a little stunned—had some curious sensations about the head and ears—was about to ask of a dozen, as they hurried up, after the secret of this new uproar—when he began to distinguish the meaning of the shouts which followed him.

“Marion’s men! Marion’s men! Hurrah for the old swamp-fox!”

It was Marion, indeed, just coming up from his dash at Stewart’s convoy. He brought with him four hundred mounted men. Hotly was the chase pressed upon the young Irish gallant. Trooper after trooper of his handsome little squadron was picked up or cut down as they rode and ran! It was with the cheer of half-drowning men that the fugitives hailed the sight of Rawdon’s red-coats, coming on at a trot, and opening to receive and shelter them, with presented bayonets toward their foes.

The musketry now began to speak from the advancing columns, and the troopers of the swamp-fox drew in their bridles, and yielded slowly and sullenly, before the advancing infantry of the British.

CHAPTER XLII.

PROGRESS OF THE ARMIES.

THE British army was able to repel the mounted men of Marion—to compel them to maintain a respectful distance—but not to drive them off. It was with a sore and angry spirit that Lord Rawdon beheld the squadron of the partisans hovering on front and flank, eagerly watching for the opportunity to swoop down and cut off stragglers, and carry off baggage-wagons. And he could do nothing, wanting cavalry. His flanks, and front, and rear, were closely watched by his musketry, and at a measured pace, drooping forward, in depression and exhaustion, he moved on in order of battle, momentarily expecting its shock from the army of Greene.

“Heavens!” said Marion to his officers, as he watched the progress of the foe with the eager appetite of the hawk. “If our infantry were but present! How we should cut them up. They are ready to drop with exhaustion. It is our presence only that keeps them up.”

Such was the case! Never was army so broken in spirit, by the terribly exhausting effects of a forced march in midsummer, and by the dispiriting and demoralizing effect of such a situation, lacking in the one arm, that of cavalry, which alone, against such a force as that of Marion, could protect them from insult.

And, staggering forward, the British army slowly worked along, as compact in mass as it could be made, with bristles every side presented, not daring to pause, not daring to hurry, with those keen sabres, and eager horsemen skirting and sweeping all about them, watchful of the opportunity to swoop and strike!

But, suddenly, they send up a cheer. Bugles were heard in front, the drums were rolling of approaching forces from below.

Stewart had marched from Orangeburg with his regiment of buffs and the cavalry of Coffin, for the relief of his superior. As the two bodies drew near to a junction, the bugles of Marion sounded, and his mounted men seemed to melt away in the woods between them, passing out of sight, and upward, to the road crossing the Caw-caw, the one which St. Julien was compelled to avoid, in consequence of the report of his scouts. Coffin's cavalry made a demonstration upon the rear of our partisans, seconded by the squad of Fitzgerald, but they were roughly handled in the brief collision, and fell back upon their columns of infantry.

Marion drew rein just above the crossing of the Caw-caw. He could dispute this passage. But the British were in no condition to pursue. No sooner had the junction of the two commands been effected, than they pressed on for Orangeburg, in no temper for conflict; and as soon as they had gone into quarters, the scouts of Marion were all about the place. Their allies within it were not idle; and the parties, singly, stole in and out during the day and night, under cover of the swamps of Edisto.

That very day Marion sent a despatch to Greene, of which we need quote but a single sentence:—

“They are neither able to fight nor fly. They are in a state of utter exhaustion, too fatigued to move. The report is that three regiments were going to lay down their arms to-day, and they will certainly do so, if required again to march. They have no notion that any force is near them except mine. Let the army come on before they can recover. We have them in a trap. One vigorous effort may close the war. Their Irish troops need but few arguments to turn their bayonets against their masters.”

And Greene eagerly prepared to adopt this counsel, issuing his orders instantly for the concentration of all his forces about Orangeburg, except that single command under Pickens, which was following closely upon the footsteps of Cruger and his loyalists, harassing them, whenever possible, on their retreat.

But we are not to suppose that St. Julien suffered all these proceedings of the army to continue, without giving any heed to the condition of the travelling party whom he had secreted

in the woods. While the actual pressure continued of the fight with the cavalry of Fitzgerald, and subsequently, while Marion hovered about the British army, and up to the moment when its junction with Stewart forbade any further hope of a successful demonstration upon it, there was no escape for the little command which St. Julien led. There had been, in fact, no time for any explanation with his superior, until the moment when, crossing the Caw-caw, they had driven back the cavalry of Coffin. Then it was that St. Julien had an opportunity of communicating with Sinclair, to whom he revealed the particulars of his progress. Meanwhile hours had passed. The day was now late in the afternoon.

"Good heavens, Peyre, what a tedious time they must have had of it, and where shall we be able to get them to, to-night?"

"Nay, let that be the after-thought. We must be content to recover them first and relieve their anxiety. Get leave for me at once, unless you desire to go yourself."

"We shall both go. I will see the general for a moment."

And to Marion he went. The latter did not hear him out.

"To be sure, Sinclair; relieve the ladies as soon as possible. What a time they have had of it. But, bring them along with you. They can find the way up to Herrisperger's to-night, and to-morrow you can send them directly across the country to the Congaree. Do not delay, remember. We can not spare you — can spare nobody now for any length of time. To-morrow we may have work. Remember, the wishes of the ladies must give way to our necessities. They must come with you. I can not spare you to go with them. Take St. Julien's troop. They will suffice."

And Sinclair, with St. Julien, started off at a smart canter, without heeding the laggard, limping movement of their steeds. They talked as they rode, compared notes, reported mutual progress, and without loss of time, made their calculations and arrangements for the future. It was arranged that Mrs. Travis and Bertha would need no escort the next day, taking the upper route to the Congaree, in a progress over a region which the patriots almost wholly covered, now that Rawdon's force was withdrawn from it. They were, at all events, compelled to see that no escort from the army could now be accorded to their

wishes. Of course, there was something said of Mr. Travis and Henry, and some speculations as to the mode of seeking and recovering them; but this was necessarily a matter of more remote consideration. For the ladies now.

And so scheming and arranging, they at length reached the spot where the carriage had sought harborage, and where Bertha had been counselled how, and with what ingredients, to fashion her bouquet.

"This is the place. Here they put in, you see," said St. Julien, and he led the way.

The carriage-wheels were followed deep into the woods, as deeply as it could go. Here they came to a halt. Their visages grew blank. St. Julien picked up a bouquet of wild flowers, very rich, fashioned very much after his directions. Sinclair found a handkerchief, with Bertha's initials in the corner. Cato's hat was also upon the ground. But carriage, ladies, Cato—all were gone!

"Good heavens, Peyre! what can this mean? What has become of them?"

"Let us look about, Willie."

Trembling like a leaf in the winds of autumn, with the agitating apprehensions of his soul, Willie Sinclair leaped from his steed, and examined the ground more closely. So did St. Julien. The troopers, meanwhile, coursed about in search also. At length, sickening as he spoke, Sinclair stooping, sank upon his knees, and cried out, in voice at once hoarse and feeble:—

"Peyre! Peyre! Is it blood?"

He pointed as he spoke to a dark crimson puddle at his feet.

"It is blood!" answered St. Julien in husky tones, and he shuddered with terrible fancies as he spoke.

"Oh, God! be merciful!" murmured the strong man, as he gazed into the puddle, as if seeking to discover, from its quality, from whose heart it had issued. There were drops of the same dark hue scattered freely about. All was clotted, hard, and drying rapidly.

"Get up, Willie! Arouse you! We must try and find the track of the carriage, and follow it. They are gone from hence."

"Oh! Peyre! Peyre! Why did you leave them for a moment?"

"Do not reproach me, Willie; let us be men now. Let us search. Let us follow!"

For a few moments, Sinclair gave full way to his grief, in a wild burst of reproach and anguish.

"You were my friend, Peyre—my more than brother. I trusted you with the woman whom I had planted in my heart, and you have left her to be murdered."

"I will recover her, Willie Sinclair, or perish myself. She is not murdered! Who would murder her? What motive?"

"The blood! the blood!" shrieked, rather than spoke, the strong but suffering man.

"It is *not* hers! My life on it, it is not hers!" was the stern and confident reply of St. Julien. "But we must waste no time—lose no opportunity in the indulgence of our weakness. Let us look farther. Let us see if we can not track the carriage."

Sinclair aroused himself with a prodigious effort.

They searched. They found the place where the vehicle had been wheeled about—had been drawn into the road again, some fifty yards from where it had entered—traced its track into the old furrows of the road, and there it merged in with others so as to become indistinguishable. It had evidently pursued, for awhile, a due northerly direction.

To dash ahead, to review the crossing at the old mill-seat where St. Julien had surprised the Tories under Watkins, to stretch on a few miles farther to another crossing, at another abandoned mill-seat, was the work of comparatively little time. Here they fancied they again found traces of the carriage-wheels. They were mistaken; but of this hereafter.

"They have crossed here into the Granby road," said St. Julien.

"It is more than probable. Let us push after them," said Sinclair; we can surely overtake them. In that heavy carriage they can move but slowly."

"Willie, let me prosecute the search. Give me but ten men, and do you hurry back to camp, and obtain my excuse from Marion."

"And why should *you* pursue the search and not me? What is Bertha Travis to you? No! Peyre; do *you* go back to the general, and state the facts. Leave *me* the ten men."

"But, Willie, remember your responsibility. *You* command a battalion. *I* can be better spared."

"Do as I tell you, Peyre!"

"Willie, we are on the eve of a battle! *You* must not be absent. You heard what the general said."

"You talk as if I should be suspected of skulking from battle."

"I talk as I should to my brother."

"What! you would peril your reputation for mine! Is that it? Do I not know, that your absence at such a moment is as fearful a trial for you as for me, Peyre? No! no! my brother! The discredit is equal with both of us, if any there be, and mine is the chief stake in this pursuit—mine is the loss and danger which alone could justify absence, at such a time, from the army. Go you back. Tell the general the simple truth. You shall peril nothing of reputation for me, Peyre, and, mortifying as it will be to me to be absent, yet I dare not, even at the peril of my reputation, consent that Bertha Travis should be exposed to danger and insult, when a bold effort of mine might save her."

"Let *me* seek and save her, dear Willie; it is almost a right. It was I that lost her."

"No, Peyre! you must return. I was unjust to you. You could not have done otherwise than you did. Back with you, with all speed, and tell the whole affair to Marion. He will do me justice. I will push the pursuit to-night—to-morrow I will be back to camp by midnight. In that time, should I fail to overtake her, I shall know that I have taken the wrong track. Here, it seems to be sufficiently marked to warrant my taking it. I will do all that I can that I may not suffer future self-reproach for supineness and timidity now."

We shall understand the generous impulses of these young men, when we remember how much a military reputation depends upon the prompt recognition of the claims of duty, over all other considerations, no matter of what sort, when armies are about to be pitched for battle. Sinclair was the military superior of

St. Julien. He was the elder also. His was the loss in the abduction of Bertha. All things, all arguments concurred in compelling the submission of the subordinate. But it was with great reluctance that he tore himself away, leaving to Willie Sinclair the task of pursuing the farther search, with the ten troopers, after his mistress and her mother.

And the two rode different ways.

"Blood! blood! Oh! God! if it should be hers!"

And murmuring thus ever as he went, Willie Sinclair dashed away on the supposed tracks of the fugitives, crossed the Caw-caw at the old mill-seat, and coursed up the road which led to Granby.

And as St. Julien rode back to camp, his subject of musing was that speaking, yet unintelligible blood, proof also—proof of crime and violence and suffering! but whose?—proof of suffering—but not of the victim! That terrible doubt. The agony of it to both.

"It is not *hers!* not hers! No! no! of that I am sure. Who would stab or murder that young creature? or her mother? Why! with what purpose? To what end? No! If anybody, it is poor old Cato that has been slain! The good old fellow has undertaken to defend his mistress, and has been butchered.

"But who are the murderers? Where could they spring from?"

St. Julien was soon bewildered in the mazes of his own conjecture. The natural suggestion was that of the interposition of some strolling body of Tories, small squads of whom were everywhere scattered about the country, engaged in all outlawed practices, and bent wholly on private revenge, and indiscriminate plunder. The thought that Bertha Travis and her mother, had fallen into such hands, though not calculated to produce any serious apprehensions for their lives—for women are not usually victims to violence in the south—was yet very far from a grateful or assuring one. There were crimes to which even that of murder might wear a comparatively innocent complexion.

But we need not trouble ourselves with the musings of St. Julien. He reached Marion after dark, and made his report.

The swamp-fox was one of the most indulgent of commanders in the case of such of his officers as he knew to be faithful and honorable. In respect to Sinclair and St. Julien, he was very well assured that neither of them had the slightest disposition to skulk from duty. The case of Sinclair he felt to be one to justify a more decided departure from orders than the one for which St. Julien apologized. Marion was not only no Martinet, but he was perhaps a little disposed to regard the regular service as quite too exacting, and as not sufficiently recognising the claims of humanity. But for the crisis in army affairs, which was generally supposed to be pending—but that he hoped to see the main army brought into the field in twenty-four hours, and Rawdon forced to the final arbitrament of the sword in that space of time—he would have suffered St. Julien to depart, with all his command, in support of his friend. It was with a feeling of great uneasiness that he resolved not to do so; and with some misgivings, when he threw himself down beneath his tree that night, whether he had not been a little too exacting, in not tendering him the leave of absence, with his troop, which might better enable Sinclair to recover his mistress.

Meanwhile, our major of dragoons crossed the Caw-caw and pressed northward. He rode till night, sometimes fancying that he had recovered the tracks of the carriage, but much wondering at its rapid progress. He camped at night in a thicket near the trail, which he could no longer pursue in the darkness, and resumed the chase with the dawn. He rode half the day, but rode in vain. He had watched the road narrowly; looked heedfully at every cross-road and turn-out; searched or inquired at every house or hovel; saw nothing; heard nothing; and, at the close of another day, was compelled to feel that he had lost all traces of the fugitives.

Marion, meanwhile, with his brigade of mounted men, had recrossed the Caw-caw, and taken post on the north side of the creek which crosses the old Orangeburg road to Granby, four miles above the village. Here he awaited the approach of Greene, maintaining, all the while, a vigilant watch upon his enemy in Orangeburg. His cavalry was in such strength, compared to that of Rawdon, that his parties approached the

village, and swept audaciously around it without challenge or pursuit.

On the 10th of July, Greene had collected together most of his detachments, and, reinforced by Sumter with his brigade, and some small parties of militia, he marched down to give his enemy battle. After he had joined Marion, it was found that the whole American army numbered a little over two thousand men; but of these only eight hundred were infantry. The force of Rawdon, including Stewart's command, was about sixteen hundred disciplined men, and perhaps two hundred supernumeraries upon whom no reliance could be placed. With so small a force of infantry, in proportion to his cavalry, Greene could not have encountered Rawdon in a pitched battle, unless with some peculiar advantage of position; while Rawdon, having no cavalry, could venture upon no enterprises which might remove him from his covered position. In artillery the two armies were nearly equal.

At the point where Marion (and afterward Greene) took post, only four miles from Rawdon's garrison, the fact of doing so was an invitation to battle. To take ground within eight or ten miles of an enemy's position is a military challenge. But Rawdon surveyed his antagonist from his sheltered places, with a grim sort of contempt, taking no notice apparently of the indignity offered him. Nothing would have better pleased this gentleman than to march out, as he had done at Camden, and give his ancient opponent battle. But he had too much at stake to peril anything for the present, and he preferred waiting until the arrival of Cruger from Ninety-Six should give him such a preponderating force as would make the issue almost certain to be successful. His hope was that Greene, pleased with the mortifying position in which his presence placed the British army, would linger in the neighborhood sufficiently long to enable him to realize the junction with Cruger. He took no occasion therefore to show disquiet, or to beat up the American quarters. He made no sorties; he attempted no negotiations. Still he was uneasy. The Americans had cut off his resources. He was for the time isolated. The parties of Marion swept round him hourly, and the only outlet left him was by the bridge over the Edisto and into the forks between the two

branches of that stream, which his batteries covered. And this was a region which was now almost reduced to barrenness.

Greene dreaded the appearance of Cruger quite as greatly as Rawdon desired it. He knew that the junction of the two would increase the force of Rawdon to nearly or quite three thousand men, and those whom Cruger brought with him were veterans, and not, like the new Irish regiments of Rawdon, of uncertain fidelity. He determined, therefore, if possible, to anticipate the approach of Cruger, by forcing Rawdon to battle.

We have already described the position of Orangeburg, but it may be necessary in this place, to state that, lying on the east bank of the North Edisto, the river so winds about it as to cover one half of its circumference. To the north and south are swamps and ravines, which not only forbid the free use of cavalry—in which so much of Greene's strength consisted—but these swamps and ravines make so near an approach to each other, as to leave, on the east side, but a narrow isthmus, uneven and broken, upon which an assailant could operate. The jail, a strong brick building of two stories, was a good substitute for a redoubt, and this building with others contiguous, commanded the approach. All of these Rawdon occupied. The crown of the hill, on which this building stood, was sufficiently spacious for the formation and manœuvres of the whole British army. To these chief defences, when you add the houses and fences of the town, it will be seen that, against a force consisting chiefly of mounted militia, the place was one of considerable strength.

Greene's *reconnoissances*, which put him in possession of these facts, compelled him to hesitate in his first resolution of forcing the British general to battle. A conference with his officers—not exactly a council of war—followed, which resulted, as usual in such cases, in the adoption of the safer policy; we are not prepared to say the *wiser* one. The Americans, for the moment, were in high spirits, the British depressed by fatigue, and vexed with discontent. The impediments of the ground were not such as, in the *present* state of military science, would be called strong. The houses occupied by Rawdon, with the exception of the jail, were wood. The eminence they occupied was exceedingly slight and of gradual rise. The ap-

proaches might be made on several quarters, and artillery might have been successfully employed upon the jail.

No doubt the true reason why the assault was not made, is to be found in the American want of infantry and the proper arms and implements. With a thousand bayonets, supported by artillery, and accompanied by a cloud of riflemen, there is no question that the natural defences of the place would have been wholly disregarded and easily overcome. Even with the force he had, were they well supplied with rations, Greene might have made a successful demonstration. But a few ounces of rice, and two ounces of lean beef, *per diem*, to a man who is expected to charge up a rising ground in the face of a well-appointed garrison, offer but small incentives to valiant enterprise.

Contenting himself with marching before, and in sight of Rawdon's position, with his whole army, on the 12th, Greene then drew off his forces. He had put a military insult upon his enemy, and there is always some satisfaction in that achievement, to both regulars and militia. He drew back to his camp that night, and before morning was advised by his scouting parties of the progress downward of Cruger's division. In another day he might be expected to arrive. It became necessary to prepare for early removal, since there could be no question but that Rawdon, as soon as the junction could be made with Cruger, would march out, and with a force with which the Americans could hardly hope to contend. We may mention, in addition, that Greene's marches had not been made without considerable exhaustion to his own troops. His infantry needed rest. It was rapidly succumbing to fatigue, the want of proper food and the terrible severity of the climate. But a good supper on the Edisto was necessary to fit them for further fatigues, and for this the camp-kettles were put in requisition at a very early hour. What sort of supper was to be had, and where it was to come from, were questions that exercised the conjectural ingenuity of all parties to a far greater extent than did the future prospects and possibilities of the war!

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE FROG CONCERT AND CAMPAIGN.

THE army of Greene were taking rest for the first time for several days, at the close of that which witnessed their insulting demonstrations before the garrison of Orangeburg. We have seen that their camp lay only four miles from that village:—a mellow sunset overspread the scene, and gentle breezes from the west cooled off sweetly the heat of a day, the ardency of which had severely tried all parties. The utmost languor for a while pervaded the encampment. The troops lay about upon the grass, under the trees, with half-shut eyes, enjoying that dreamy sensation which supervenes after fatigue, and before recuperation—mind and body in concert, as it were, for mutual restoration. But few of the groups visible in our foreground, were capable of exertion, and but few, indeed, of those whom we do not see, were any more equal to it than those immediately before our eyes. Here and there, some important adjutant, ensign, or corporal, might be found, restlessly employed, giving orders about the use of moonshine. Troopers who had thrown their chief burdens on the loins of their horses, were, perhaps, the most lively; and groups of these were to be seen, busy in consuming the last drops of sunshine and Jamaica at command, while flirting the cards at “old sledge” from well-thumbed and greasy packs of “pictures,” pitching quoits, or grooming horses. We confess that Marion’s men were the chief sinners after this fashion; his boys of Santee, Pedee, Waccamaw, and the parish country generally, having a sort of natural calling for the fine arts, were busy with cards and coppers at every rest. Cards and dice constituted so many fine arts in their hands. It was the boast of some of them that they could extract all sorts of music, fun, and philosophy, from the four aces.

To this general rest and languor of the army, there were, however, some striking exceptions. The command of Marion stretched toward the Caw-caw. In the woods of this region, an hour before sunset, there might be seen a squad of twenty troopers, dark, bronzed, half-naked young savages, following, with some interest, the speech and movements of a large, broad-shouldered, and great-bellied personage, wearing the uniform—somewhat doubtful, indeed, because of rents, stains, and deficiencies—of a captain of dragoons. He was on foot, and by no means active of movement, though taking his steps with the confidence of a war-horse, and the solid firmness of an elephant. He was a fine-looking fellow, in spite of the too great obtrusion upon the sight of his abdominal territory, a region which he, nevertheless, endeavored to circumscribe within reasonable bounds by a girthing of leather, only half covered with a crimson sash, which no doubt had the desired effect in some degree, though at some sacrifice of the wearer's comforts. His face was full almost as the moon at full, of a ruddy brown, his head massive, chin large and prominent eyes, bright but small, and mouth eager with animation. His nose was decidedly intellectual. At his elbow stood a negro, jacket off, and arms akimbo, who followed the motions of his superior with a mixed air of deference and assurance. Around these two the troopers were gathered. Before the group, slaughtered and skinned, hanging from a tree, was one of the lean beeves of the country—a poor skinny beast, weighing some two hundred pounds, gross, bone, meat, skin, offal! Near at hand stood a small, rickety, covered wagon, the contents of which we may conjecture. It was one of Marion's recent captures from the convoy of Stewart; and contained, no doubt, some resources, the value of which may be guessed from the mysterious looks which were, every now and then, cast upon it by passing groups of thirsty dragoons, the very glances of whom are apt to burst locks, and consume stores.

Our captain was busy with the commissariat of the brigade—not as the head of it, by no means, but as premier—head-counsellor, and legal and moral adviser.

“I tell you, Fickling, it will never do. Tell me there were no better beeves to be had! You have just taken what they

please to give you. You are too modest. It is the infirmity of your family, whenever the interest is not absolutely and directly your own. We do this business of foraging for all the army, yet it seems that the meanest share is always to fall to us. Tell me nothing of Colonel Lee. He has an independent legion; let him pick up his own beeves. As for the field-officers, I do not see that their official position confers upon them any right to better tastes and appetites than a poor captain of partisan cavalry. I thank my stars that I have tastes which are as well cultivated as any brigadier or colonel in the army. And shall my tastes be defrauded, because these epauletted buffaloes are greedy, and you are mealy-mouthed? Why the devil don't you assert yourself, man, and assist us, as you should, when the distribution of the beef takes place? You are a fool, Fickling, for your submission! Colonel Lee's man steps before you, and says, 'Colonel Lee;' and Colonel Washington's man starts up, and says, 'Colonel Washington'—and these, and a score of others, even while they speak, clap hands on the best pieces, and choose the fattest flanks; and when all are served, you steal up, with finger in your mouth, and murmur, 'Is anything left for General Marion?' Is that the way to do business? I tell you, 'No, sir!' Your true way is to take the best that offers—lay bold hands on it—nay, thrust it through with your naked sabre, and say, 'Marion's brand!' Do the thing as you should, with the proper look and manner, and not a rascalion in the army, representing no matter what division, dare lay hands on it after that! If they do, let me be at your elbow next time, with two or three fellows of my choosing!"

"But, Captain Porgy—"

"But me no buts, Mr. Fickling. I'll have you out of your office, if you do not but against this sort of distribution. You are to provide us; and, if you do not comprehend that our soldiers are just as deserving of good food as any continentals in the service, you are not fit for our service, and I'll have you out of it. General Marion himself submits quite too much to this sort of treatment. If there is a fine horse in the brigade, it is immediately wanted for some one of Lee's dragoons—some d—d henchman or bugleman—and off the colonel goes to Greene, and tells him that his legion wants horses, and that

Marion has enough and to spare, and we are called upon to dismount, and provide other people. Yet are we kept day and night on the trot—off to-day for the Pon-pon and Savannah, to-morrow for the Pedee—now running down Tories, now cattle; seeking information, scouting, spying, called out at all hours; and how is this to be done, if we are to give up our horses. The brigade has covered all this low country, from the Pedee to the Savannah, for three years and more, and the best that is got in the forays that we alone make, are served out to these hungry feeders. I won't submit to it. They shall neither have my horses nor my cattle; and if you take any more such beef as this, Fickling, when better is to be had, we'll turn you, neck and heels, out of your department."

"But, Captain Porgy—"

"See to it!"

"But—"

"See to it! That's all! I say no more—to you!—Tom!"

"Sah!"

"Get our share of that carrion! See what you can do with it. We must have soup, I suppose. Make a pilaw. We have plenty of pepper now. You can hardly get a decent steak from the beast. But do what you can. I must see after something more. We are to have company to-night. I have asked the great men, the big-wigs, the governor, Generals Marion and Sumter, the colonels of the brigade, Maham, Singleton, and a few others. Have everything ready by ten o'clock. Did you succeed in getting any melons?"

"I empty one patch, maussa."

"Whose?"

"I dunn know quite 'zackly, but he's a fiel' jes' yer on de back ob de village. De melons is quite 'spectable."

"Ripe?"

"As de sunshine kin make 'em."

"Good! Do as much stealing in an honest way as you can! D—n the patriotism that can't eat stolen fruits!"

"Wha' else you guine hab, maussa."

"Who knows what I can get? I must look. There ought to be frogs here in abundance, and of good size. Not such as we can find in a rice reserve, Tom, but passable in war-time, and

delicate enough for hot weather. I shall look out for a young alligator or two."

"Dat'll do! Gi' me two young alligator tail, and de frog, and I gi' you fus' rate tuttle soup and ball, and steak."

"Must have a ragout, Tom. Have you seen no pigs about, Tom!"

"Nebber yer de fus' squeak, maussa."

"Well"—with a grunt—"we must do as we can. Come, boys, are you ready?"

"Ay, ay, captain!" from a score of voices; and a dozen active young fellows presented themselves, armed with wooden spears and knives.

"Where's George Dennison?"

A voice answered from the foot of a tree.

"Come along, George; don't be lazy. What you shall see this evening will enable you to beat Homer in a new epic, in which cranes and frogs shall figure to posterity."

And, following the corpulent captain, the whole party pushed down to the swamp.

"There's a battalion for you, George Dennison. Not a rascal under six feet—half a dozen nearer seven. I chose them specially for the expedition. They are our cranes, and are all eager for the war."

"And the frogs are sounding for the conflict. Hear their tongues, already. The concert for the evening is begun. Hear the chirruping overture:—

"'Fry bacon—tea-table!
Coyong! coyong! coyong!
Supper on table—supper on table,
Eat if you're able!
Blood an' 'ounds—blood an' 'ounds."

"By the way, captain, a frog concert, would not be a bad speculation in the great cities of Europe. How a score or two of musical fellows, who had once or twice slept in our swamps, or lingered after sunset along our rice-fields, would make capital out of it! And such a sensation. What a hurly-burly, subdued to order, they could make of it."

"No doubt! The notes and tones occupy every note of the *gamut*! It is a rare original music. But the secret would lie

in making the music tributary to satire. The frogs should furnish a running commentary on the follies and vices of society, as in Aristophanes, only adapted to our times. It would task art admirably to work out of it an opera—the Loves of the Frogs! Little Squeaka, the dreaming sentimental damsel, just emerging into society—coming out; in her train some half a dozen Jockos—minnows of fashion, that sing in a love-lisp always—Therubina! ah! Therubina! Oh the rich fun of such a farcical! Of what a delightful variety would the affair admit! The lover, the villain, the priest, the mother—all the usual varieties, not forgetting Arlecchino. Of course, the frogs are not less fortunate than their betters. They have a Jack Pudding among them. The squirrels have I know.”

“Don’t forget the duenna! Hear her falsetto, squeaking through a score of crevices in her broken teeth:—

“‘On your knees, O,
Not a sneeze, O,
Don’t you hear your mother coming?
‘To be kissed, O,
By the priest, O,
Is the saintliest sort of mumming!’

“‘O, alack, O,
Such a smack, O,
Makes the very echoes jealous;’
‘But it proves, O,
Holy loves, O,
Most particularly zealous.’

“‘Hark that drumming!’
‘Mother coming!’
‘And that pother?’
‘Tis your father!’
‘Awful sounds, O!’
‘Blood and ’ounds, O!’—

“In full fresco swells the chorus,
From the motley group before us;
Sighing, swelling,
Barking, belling—
Such a moaning, such intoning,
So much groaning, honing, droning,
Calling, falling, bawling, drawling,
Speaking, shrieking, squeezing, squeaking,

"All subsiding to a quiver,
 And a shiver,
 Only to ascend, in thunder,
 Rolling up and roaring under —
 Blood and 'ounds, O! blood and 'ounds, O!
 Awful sounds, breaking bounds,
 Setting all the woods a-shaking,
 Setting all the bog a-quaking,
 All the swampy empire waking,
 With the eternal blood and 'ounds, O!

"Rending, raging,
 Battle waging,
 'Yond all musical assuaging —
 O'er all mortal sounds uproarious,
 O'er all mortal sense victorious,
 Like the diapason glorious, —
 That through pipes and stops,
 Shrieks, and bounds, and hops,
 Foams, and frisks, and frolics,
 Rolls and rages, rocks and rollicks,
 Feeding every mortal stopper, ah!
 Of the grand Italian opera!"

Thus it was that the rustic poet of the partisans, gave forth extempore an embodiment of the music of the frogpondians.

"Hurrah!" cried Porgy, "hurrah, Geordie—why, man, you are native, to frog manor born, with all the pipes and bellows of the swamp in your own wind-bags; or to requite you in your own coin:—

"Worthy venison,
 Geordie Dennison,
 You will soon require a stopper, O,
 Scaring off with greater clamor,
 Every leap-frog from his amour,
 Turning every mother's son of 'em
 Making fun of 'em,—
 To a hopper off, from a hopper, O!"

And thus doggrelizing as they went, the two led their laughing cohort down into the swamp.

The Caw-caw was in full concert. Bull and bell, squeak and shriek, moan and groan. All the artistes were in exercise, engaged, no doubt, in some rehearsal, preparatory to some great ceremonial—the bridal, possibly, of the young princess of the pondians.

Porgy and his corps, with their pointed spears of wood, wooden forks, baskets, and knives, stole down into the lagunes. What a picture for the stage! What an action for the burlesque drama! But the matter was a serious one enough for one of the parties. Long will the frogs of that ilk remember with wailing the raid of the cranes of that day. Could you have seen those long, gaunt backwoodsmen, each with shaft, prong, or trident, striding hither and thither in the bog and lake, striding right and left, poised above their great-eyed enemies, and plunging forward to grapple the wounded and squalling victim before he should sheer off, or, as George Dennison said afterward, describing the affair in sonorous heroics:—

“Could you have seen that theatre of frogs,
As each in due delight and bog immersed,
Sprawled out, at length, in slime and sandy bed;
Great legs of green or brown outstretching wide;
Great arms thrown out as if embracing heaven;
With eyes dilating, big as Bullace grapes,
Upturned, and gloating as with rapturous rage;
Great flattened jaws, that, ever and anon,
Distending with voluminous harmonies,
Sent forth their correspondences of sound,
In due obedience to the choragus,
Who still, at proper intervals, pour’d out
The grand refrain —sonorous, swelling still,
Till, at the last, the apex diapason
Was caught, was won, in glorious ‘Blood and ’ounds!’”

It was a war of shallow waters. Habitual croakers are only justified when they perish. They have nothing to complain of. They always seem to anticipate their fate, and this seems to prove it only just execution after judgment—which, of course, is legal and becoming. Our partisans had grown expert in this sort of warfare. The Caw-caw swamp was a region in which the frogs held populous communities and cities, and—you know the proverb—“Thick grass is easier cut than thin.” It was a massacre! Every spearman could count his score or two of slain, and, really, a very pretty spectacle they made when, emerging from the swamp, each carried his victims aloft, trans-fixed upon a sharp and slender rod, run through at the neck, eyes wider than ever, and legs and arms spread about in all

directions. Nor was this all. No less than three young alligators and three times as many terrapins were surprised and captured, almost without a struggle, and borne off in triumph to the camp! The wailing in the Caw-caw that night was not greatly lessened by the loss of so many sonorous voices, since we may reasonably suppose that maternal suffering sent up such extra clamors for the absence of precious young ones, as more than atoned for the diminished forces of the community.

"On your lives, boys, not a word of what we have been doing," said Captain Porgy. They all swore to keep faith.

"There are thousands of clever people in the world," he added, "who require to be surprised into happiness. Some of my guests, to-night, are probably of this description. I shall teach them a new pleasure—nay, a new moral in a new pleasure—teach them how absurd it is to despise any of the gifts of Providence."

And, following out this policy, it was with great secrecy that the spoils of the frog campaign were conveyed to his quarters, and delivered over to the custody of Tom, his cook. Tom, we may add, like every sensible cook, made a sufficient mystery of his art to keep prying curiosity away from the kitchen whenever he was engaged in any of his culinary combinations. Let us leave these for other parties, and for proceedings of more imposing consequence if less attractive performance. We shall seek to be present when supper is on the table.

CHAPTER XLIV.

PLAN FOR THE CAMPAIGN OF THE DOG-DAYS.

WHILE our cranes were busied in the assault upon the green jackets of the pond, the American general had assembled about him, in the woods in the rear of his encampment, all the leading persons of his army. Sentinels were duly stationed around for the keeping off of intruders. The assembly was a somewhat primitive one in the fashion of its grouping, if not its materials. The greensward offered the only seats. The green boughs of oak and pine furnished the only roofing. A few logs afforded places for persons of distinction; but the greater number were fain to make themselves level with the green bosom of their mother earth—at this season covered with a plentiful clothing of verdure; crab-grass and crowfoot, to say nothing of dock, fern, and a pretty variety of wild flowers. General Greene received the several persons as they presented themselves. He was a person of imposing size and figure—too portly for the ethereal, but of goodly make for a major-general of provincials—of fine, commanding form—of mild, intelligent countenance, which a slight obliquity in one of his eyes did not impair: of simple manners, easy and not ungraceful carriage. Greene was a man of good military abilities;—we are not prepared to call them extraordinary;—of cool, sedate mind, and ready resource; not very daring; not brilliant of conception; too Fabian of policy for the proper use of *catalry*—which implies the necessity of daring; and perhaps a little wanting in that promptness which secures and fixes victory at the moment of crisis, when she trembles from side to side, uncertain where to settle. In the sort of warfare which he was called upon to conduct, during the war of the Revolution, in the South, he was particularly useful, perhaps, because of his caution—in not perilling the

cause upon any single action, where defeat might be certain ruin, and in tempering a very sanguine and impetuous people. He was cautious, like Washington; but in greater degree than Washington; and did not aim at any brilliant performances. In a service so inexperienced as that of the American, during the Revolution, and with such incoherent elements to manage, caution, perhaps, was an element of the greatest military virtue in a general. It might lose many opportunities, and very possibly did, but it incurred no extraordinary perils, such as might not be repaired without great embarrassment.

The bluff, manly person and well-bronzed face of William Washington, a man even more massy of build than Greene, was the first to present itself. Washington was famous at a charge. He affected no military refinements or science. There is our enemy. He is in the way. No more was necessary. Washington understood the rest, and rushed at once to his performance. And Marion followed, slight of form, brown of aspect, with his keen black eyes, and vulture-like hook of nose, Roman all over; quiet of manner, retiring of habit; undistinguished in carriage; and, next to Pickens, one of the most unassuming of persons, almost shy and timid of approach in society. Too modest, in fact, for the assertion of his own rights.

Harry Lee, of the legion, next presented himself, a person of much more pretension and of genuine dragoon audacity; a keen spirited soldier; who kept his legion in first-rate order, at the expense of everybody else; something of a martinet; something of a carpet knight; but full of talent, which only needed a more wholesome training, to develop into first-rate excellence. He took the general's hand, smiled complacently around upon the group; sauntered about for a while; his dragoon sword jostling the ground as he walked, as was the way with Tarleton's, from its great length. He seemed quite too mercurial to seek a seat. He kept the turf until he suddenly encountered the sardonic smile of Sumter; when he let himself down quietly enough upon the roots of an oak, and watched the approach of the successive parties to the conference.

Sumter's fine features were remarkably composed; composed, perhaps, with some effort—for Sumter was in no good humor with Greene or Lee at this period. He thought himself wronged

by both. The latter had contrived to give offence to both himself and Marion, by his propensity to overbear and manage ; and Greene had somewhat become the instrument, blind or otherwise, of this dashing self-complacency of the legionary colonel.

But Greene had erred, besides, of his own head, and both of the partisan generals, Sumter and Marion, were by this time made aware that, while dealing with them, quietly, in the handsomest terms of compliment, he had been writing letters to other persons which spoke slightly of themselves, their followers, and performances. Perhaps, but for Rutledge, both of them would long before have abandoned the service. Marion *did* seek an occasion to resign, from offences then received ; and Sumter finally disbanded his brigade, in indignation, not long after this very council.

But Rutledge himself appears, having reached the camp an hour before. He is followed by Colonel Williams, the adjutant general of the army, a Marylander of good abilities ; cool, circumspect, vigilant, and of considerable military talents. Colonel Carrington came with him—a high-toned officer, in whose judgment Greene entertained considerable confidence.

These were all present at the conference, which was not a council of war, by the way, but a sort of military conference for the interchange of opinions. Greene welcomed them all with proper breeding, offered them pleasantly a choice of seats, and, in a few brief remarks, congratulated them on the prospect of affairs. He then motioned Rutledge, with whom he had already enjoyed a private conversation. To Rutledge he was greatly disposed to defer, finding him, as he himself confesses, one of the most remarkable persons he had ever met.

And he *was* such ! The genius of John Rutledge was eminently executive. He possessed that grand sweep of vision, in civil affairs, which, in the military, is perhaps somewhat disparaged by the French descriptive phrase—the *coup d'œil*. With a grasp of the eye he not only took in the whole field, in generals, but he grouped the details of it, in proper relationship, and at the same glance, with equal confidence and facility. His mind was wide, expansive, penetrating—and—*honest*. All its instincts, if we may so speak, were truthful. The true was its natural aim ; its impulsive seeking. He was at once frank and

earnest; hence, he was a popular orator of great command, ready at the emergency, and always compelling respect, and winning confidence. He was bold, ardent, just. He conceived readily the grandeur of the trust reposed in him, and he had no such small passions as could divert, or dissuade, from its execution. He merged—and this is the grand secret of patriotism always—he merged his individual pride and pleasure—his mind and his affections, equally, in the cause which he had undertaken. We hardly express our full meaning in these words. He was not, briefly, so much John Rutledge, as the man of the times and country. In these he lived, and was properly himself. He was at once an individual and a representative man! and such are the greatest!

He spoke—and with that ease, sweetness, strength, and earnestness, which command attention and secure confidence. His words entered men's ideas, and gave them the necessary utterance. Not a man present but fancied, as he spoke, that he himself had furnished the *motif* for every syllable that was uttered.

“I congratulate you, general, and you gentlemen, all, at this present meeting, and under such favorable auspices. Our affairs, in one little month, have wonderfully brightened. The prospect is now good, that we shall compel our enemy very soon to lift his foot entirely from the breast of our little state. You have already freed her, in great part, from his iron footsteps. He has been driven from all his strongholds in the interior. His fortresses, everywhere, have been dismantled. Camden is now ours; Ninety-Six, Augusta, Granby, Forts Galphin, Grierson, Motte; and it needs but a thousand bayonets to expel him from the post of Orangeburg, which lies before us now! And this conquest, under our present auspices, can not long be wanting. You have circumscribed his bounds, and it is only between the Santee and the Edisto, that he makes a show of possession; and it is only in the garrison of Charleston that he makes any show of security. *Here*, if he dares to linger until we can recruit, we have him—to be destroyed at pleasure, like an elephant in a morass. These, gentlemen, have been the fruits of our toils since the opening of the present campaign. They are sufficiently encouraging to justify the most sanguine hopes, that

we shall finally expel the invader from his securities—from all our territory, even before the close of the present season.

“But you need respite! Our summer is even more terribly hostile to man than the winters of Siberia! Your toils have been already too much prolonged, particularly in the case of those who have so nobly come to our succor, from the sister states of Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, and Delaware. We, who know our climate, must not suffer your patriotism to peril your lives, unnecessarily. You must be respited! You must seek the salubrious hills of the Santee, where I have already made such provisions for your comfort, as was possible to our resources. There, your general can reorganize his infantry, and establish it on a better footing for performance. There, while you rest, you will probably receive such supplies from Congress, of arms and ammunition, as will enable you to face, and grapple with the best-appointed veterans of Europe. I am promised these supplies, and doubt not that we shall seasonably receive them.

“Meanwhile, our cavalry and mounted riflemen, in which lies our greatest strength, need not be idle. I am about to propose to them a service, in which, I am sure, their patriotism will not fail, and from which I hope that we shall derive the happiest advantages to the country. You have seen with what efficacy we wrought, when our troops were thrown between the outposts of the enemy, and his base of operations. We have seen that the movement has compelled him to contract his circle of control, within the narrowest limits. I am for pursuing the same process, for compelling him to quit all his interior posts—Orangeburg, Eutaw, Wantoot, Watboo, Biggin, Monk’s Corner, and Dorchester—by once more passing between him and his Charleston garrison. With the overwhelming force, in cavalry, which we command, we can cut him off from all supplies—from all communication—and alarm him lest he himself be cut off in the interior. To do this, all that needs, is to hurl our mounted men across the country, from Orangeburg to the seaboard, covering the space, patrolling it everywhere, cutting his scattered bands to pieces, and thundering at the very gates of Charleston. If this proceeding does not make the British lion turn tail on the Edisto for ever, he is of much tougher material than

we have ever found him yet! Do not understand me as disposed to disparage his courage or his firmness, his valor or his resources; but only to say that our process is one to shake even a greater firmness and courage, than he has ever yet shown, brave, and stubborn, and audacious as he is! What think you, gentlemen, of the scheme of operations. It is understood, gentlemen, that the call is for *volunteers*—it is not an absolute command for service! It appeals to a portion only of the army, and presupposes repose for the rest. To *command* this would be a hardship. To appeal to the mounted men, by whom alone the duty can be done, is all that remains to me, as governor of the state. I wait for your reply.”

Sumter instantly answered:—

“The scheme is a good one, governor—admirable, in fact—and can hardly fail to produce the results expected. I presume you can hardly doubt that I am ready at any moment. I think I may safely answer for my command.”

“What says General Marion?”

Marion smiled as he answered:—

“I am so constantly in the saddle, governor, that I am afraid I should find summer quarters tedious. You will please take for granted that my people are prepared for duty.”

“Colonel Lee?—Colonel Washington?”

Lee answered for the legion; and Washington made his great sabre answer for him, drawing it half out, and thrusting it back with a clang that sounded effectively his only half-spoken sentence of approbation. He was a man of few words, and his bright, upward look, declared his readiness for a share in the enterprise.

It was then scanned in all its details.

“And now,” said Rutledge, “if you will suffer me, General Greene, I will nominate General Sumter for the command of the whole enterprise.”

Greene bowed his head affirmatively, and Sumter quickly said:

“I am greatly honored, sir, in your own and the choice of the governor. I accept the appointment with pride, and trust that my abilities will prove worthy of your confidence; will equal, with proper performance, my own desires, and realize all the results which you anticipate from the expedition.”

Rutledge continued :—

“General Marion gives me to understand, General Sumter, that he will gladly serve under your banner: I know that he will admirably and earnestly second all your enterprises; I take for granted that you will be supported with equal ardor by Colonels Washington and Lee, Colonels Lacy and Singleton, the Hamptons, Taylor, Maham and Harden; all, I know, will rejoice to engage in an expedition, the duties of which are so honorable, and so arduous, and which promise such glorious results to the country.

“Your command, General Sumter, as General Greene advises me, will consist of all the state troops, the legion of Colonel Lee, and a detachment of artillery with a single field-piece; in the whole about one thousand men. To such a force of mounted men, the foe can oppose nothing. With this particular arm, moving with your accustomed celerity, you may surprise all his outposts below, capture all his detachments, or compel their rapid flight to the city. These are the objects of the expedition; the farther results of which must be to compel the army of Rawdon to fall back for its own safety, upon the seaboard, where we hope to confine him for the future, and finally conquer and expel him thence.

“With your permission, General Greene, I will reserve Major Sinclair, whom I design to advance to a colonelcy in the state line, for a separate duty, with the single company of Captain St. Julien. He will co-operate, as occasion serves, with the command of General Sumter, being also designed for service below. The command of General Pickens, will need the same temporary respite with the infantry. His horses are exhausted in the pursuit of Cruger and the tories, as he himself writes: ‘So exhausted that they could neither get up with the enemy, nor, if they could succeed in doing so, get away from him.’ It is fortunate that ours are in better condition for the great foray which we now contemplate—a foray, gentlemen, which, I trust, will make itself known to future times, as the ‘Raid of the Dog-days,’ constituting, as it will, a novelty in our campaign, an episode of peculiar character and interest, by reason equally of its own glorious results, and of the season in which it is undertaken—a season, which, hitherto, has usually given

entire repose to our armies; the ardency of our sun usually proving quite sufficient to subdue the ardency of our patriotism. That you are thus prepared to deny yourselves the usual respite, adds the crowning laurels to your chivalry. May the God of battles accord you the health, the strength, the energy, which are essential to render your patriotism famous for all future times."

And, with the grace of the accomplished orator, when his task is done, Rutledge bowed to his hearers, then especially to Greene, and receding a pace, remained standing while the latter came forward.

Greene, without being an eloquent or striking speaker, was an impressive one. He had no arts; his manner was one of great simplicity, but of great directness. Speaking briefly, and directly to the point, he always commanded attention.

"You have heard, gentlemen," he said, "what Governor Rutledge has so well delivered. He has delivered our mutual wishes and opinions already agreed upon between us, and has spoken, I am glad to think, your sentiments no less than ours. In the selection of General Sumter for the command of this noble enterprise, in which you are to engage, his choice is mine. In the indication of your objects, we are both agreed as to their results; and in your hands I am sure we shall not be disappointed of our hopes. It remains to me to indicate to you what I conceive to be the best routes to pursue in this expedition. To a certain extent, several bodies of troops must, for awhile, act independently. They will consider themselves detached for the purpose, subject only to the general plan of operation, which requires their early return, as soon as each special separate object is attained, to the headquarters of General Sumter. These detachments will sweep down by every road or avenue which may conduct to Charleston. General Sumter, himself, with such a force as he shall please to reserve to himself, will pursue the Congaree road on the south side of that river, and the east side of Cooper. Colonel Lee with the legion, will attempt the post at Dorchester. But, as we may reasonably calculate on a stout resistance from the garrison at that place, Colonel Henry Hampton, will co-operate with him in this object, and, after securing the bridge at Dorchester, with a de-

tachment, will unite the rest of his command with that of Colonel Lee. Colonel Wade Hampton will also co-operate with these bodies, with a detachment of Sumter's cavalry. To one of these parties, must be assigned the task of securing—holding—the bridge over the Four-Holes creek, in order that the several detachments, operating below, may be advised of the movements of Rawdon's force at Orangeburg. A detachment of Marion's men, under Colonel Maham, passing the head of Cooper river and Watboo creek, will penetrate below to the eastward of Biggin's church, and destroy the bridge of Watboo. This will help to obstruct the retreat of the garrison at Biggin and Watboo. A detachment passing to the east of Dorchester, will take the Wassamasaw road to Goose-creek bridge, and cut off all communication between Dorchester and Monck's Corner, and between the latter place and Charleston by the route west of Cooper river. You thus, General Sumter, cover all the possible routes for the escape of the enemy below. You cut off all his communications. You isolate him at Orangeburg, and destroy every post of rest or supply between him and the sea. His necessities will then be to cut his way, through *us*, to Charleston; and, I trust, that, with the rest afforded us now, the main army will soon be in a condition to render this a fruitless attempt! We may even hope, gentlemen, to add to the laurels of the south a *Rawdonade* of equal importance with the *Burgoyne* of Saratoga.

"The farther details, General Sumter, I yield with confidence to your judgment and discretion.

"Gentlemen, we shall march with the dawn for the Congaree. General Pickens, in a letter just received, advises me that Cruger will effect his junction with Rawdon sometime to-night. This junction will place him in command of three thousand troops. We must not wait for his lordship when he shall be thus strengthened. Your mounted men will be required to escort the army to a point of safety, where we may dispense with your further assistance. Colonel Williams will see that due instructions will be issued in general orders before night. For the present our conference is ended. Our official tasks are over.—Governor Rutledge, General Sumter, General Marion—gentlemen all, may I have the pleasure of your company at

supper. I know not what the commissariat and cook can do for us—there is nothing promising, I fear, in our larder; but I suspect we can offer you as wholesome a variety as can be found in camp, and I certainly tender you as warm a welcome.”

The invitation was received in silence. There was apparently some embarrassment among the group. Greene himself began to look with embarrassment around him—not knowing what the silence meant—when Rutledge with a merry laugh, exclaimed:—

“I am afraid, general, you are quite too late with these gentlemen as with myself. I fancy they are all engaged elsewhere.”

Greene looked about him with the air of a man who thought it exceedingly strange that anybody in the army should be able, in the present condition of the commissariat, to give a dinner, but he did not say so. He knew that it occasioned him no small effort to supply the adequate provision; and who, besides, so capable? As if fully comprehending his thoughts, Rutledge continued:—

“When you fancy, general, that nobody in camp is likely to offer so wholesome a variety of edibles for dinner as yourself, *I* fancy that there is hardly a gentleman present, who does not please himself with the idea that you are mistaken. Come, sir, do not look so distressed. You are yet to learn what resources are possessed by these wild riders of our friend Marion. I do not *know* the fact, but I will venture a goodly dozen of old Madeira, whenever we shall be able to get at the Charleston cellars, that we are all invited to the same mess. I confess myself committed too, and with my own grateful will, and gratified consent, to the supper of Captain Porgy of Marion’s.”

“And I.”

“And I.”

“And I,”—from all present, the general himself and Colonel Lee excepted.

“Captain Porgy!” said Greene, “Captain Porgy! Where have I heard of Captain Porgy.”

“From me, sir, I suspect,” said Lee rather sullenly. “I have dined and supped with Captain Porgy. He is a rare companion—a strange fellow, with a clever French faculty, of making a dish out of a June bug, and a dinner out of—out of—”

"A mere matter of moonshine!" added Rutledge. "And a good dish and dinner he makes of it too, let me tell you. He will contrive to sup bountifully upon elements, upon which simpler folks would starve. If Colonel Lee would finish now, he will tell you that he never supped better in his life than when he supped with Captain Porgy."

"Never, sir; I admit it. I did not feed with the less pleasure that I never once guessed what were the ingredients of the dish."

"Really, gentlemen," said Greene, "I had no idea that I had such a competitor. And what am I to do? I have ordered supper for twenty, and find myself without a guest."

And the general really appeared much mortified.

"Were it consistent with proper discipline and military practice, general," quoth Rutledge, "I should counsel you to do as the rich man had to do in scripture, who made a great feast, and, like yourself, was disappointed in his fine company—so sent out with a dragnet and took in the lame, halt, blind, and every way destitute. But this will hardly answer in our day and country. But, if you will suffer me, I will reconcile all difficulties. If you will permit me to order your cook and butler to send all your supplies to the quarters of the swamp-fox, with my respect to the worthy Captain Porgy, apprizing him that you will honor his table to-night, all will be right. I will take leave to include Colonel Lee in the invitation."

"But this would be a great liberty, governor," said Greene.

"Not a whit, sir. Captain Porgy will feel himself honored, I assure you;—nay, will be greatly pleased that we have dealt with him so frankly. He is a gentleman, sir, of an old house and feather, and knows how to requite a courtesy whatever its aspect."

"But—we shall take him by surprise—so many."

"You forget that nearly all of us are already secured as his guests. Beside, you will send over your own supplies."

Marion *sotto voce*—"If Porgy will suffer them to be brought on table."

And he whispered to Rutledge:—

"Let the meats be sent over before the general's cook has touched them."

"Right! I comprehend," said Rutledge, in a whisper also. Then aloud —

"Trust to me, general; I know my man—I shall be careful not to commit you. I confess my anxiety that you should know Captain Porgy, and see what are the resources of our Low-Country partisans. He will be honored, I repeat, by our frank proceedings; and," in a whisper—"the effect will be good upon our people. They love to see a frank simplicity and open confidence in great men."

Greene smiled at the compliment, his blue eyes looking archly into those of Rutledge:—

"Ah! governor, you are more of a tactician than any military man I know."

"In the commissariat, perhaps," responded the other. "Well, you give me permission."

"If you say so."

"I do! and will give all the necessary orders, despatch a note to our host, and send over the provisions. But the latter must be done at once, and before your cook has handled them."

"Why so—why not let them be dressed?" said Greene.

"For the best of reasons. If dressed, they would be held in no condition for Captain Porgy's table. Do not be mortified, general, to be told, that your *cuisinier* would never receive his diploma from the hands of Captain Porgy. He is a martinet in the kitchen. He refines upon soups, is sublime in sauces, and altogether scorns and despises the cruel maceration of meat in hot waters, which is the vulgar usage of our cooks in camp. Understand, again, that Captain Porgy is no vulgar person; but a rare fellow for company, a man of soul and humor, and at his table you will be sure to find an appetite though you had already fed to surfeit. As Colonel Lee says, you must be wise enough to take your supper as you take your religion with a perfect faith, which is never guilty of the impertinence of Peter, of questioning the cleanness of the meats which Providence has furnished."

"But everything's wholesome!" said Greene, with a simplicity which argued his Rhode Island ignorance of such authorities as Ude, and Glass, and Savarin.

"Wholesome!" exclaimed Lee—"By Jupiter, General Greene, I do not know that I have tasted wholesome food since my last supper with Captain Porgy. I know not why he has not invited me, since I am very sure no man could have done more justice to his fare."

Lee was evidently piqued.

"An omission easily accounted for, Colonel Lee," answered Rutledge promptly, "since you had not come in from below, when the invitations were sent out; no one could say that you would be in to-night. I take upon myself to say that no one will be more welcome to his table than yourself."

"Well, if the taste to do justice to his table is sufficient commendation, I may safely assert that you are right," said Lee, his complacency always making belief easy, in respect to his own welcome. Marion looked grave, but said nothing. *He* knew that Porgy would not, of himself, invite Lee. He had too seriously displeased the partisans; but Marion was not displeased that Lee should invite himself, which, in his, as in the case of Greene, was substantially the fruit of Rutledge's diplomacy. The latter, as usual, had his own way. The despatch was sent to Porgy, and Greene's cook was seasonably arrested in the very act of doing murder upon his edibles. The party adjourned to meet at the sylvan camp of the swamp-fox.

CHAPTER XLV.

DOINGS IN THE APOLLO CHAMBER

OUR partisan division of the army, with their horses, occupied no small extent of territory. Our Captain Porgy, himself, with his little personal equipage, demanded considerable space. He was the person always to secure that "ample room and verge enough," which, as he himself said, were essential to his individual girth. "My breadth of belt," he was wont to say, "implies a fair field; and, having that, I ask no favors." Besides, being of social habits, his mess was always a large one. Among his immediate associates, retainers rather, he kept not only his cook, but his poet; the one almost as necessary as the other. Then, he never was without a guest, and whenever his commissariat was particularly well supplied, he was sure to have a full table. Such an idea as a good table, without an adequate number of guests to enjoy it, seemed to him a thing vile, unreasonable, inhuman, and utterly unchristian. We have seen that, particularly fortunate in his foray among the green-jacketed denizens of the Caw-caw, he had made arrangements for a larger circle than usual. His own tastes and purposes requiring it, Captain Porgy usually chose his own ground whenever tents were to be pitched. He had a great eye to proper localities.

"The open woods, on the south and west," was his rule. "Let the swamp and thicket cover my back on the east. That east wind has been of evil tendency from the earliest periods of time. The Bible speaks of it. A bad-tempered person, soured and surly, growling always, and insufferable from bile and conceit, is said to fill his bowels with the east wind. It has a bad effect on the best bowels. Give me just opening enough on the east for the purposes of draught, but let your tent be open to the full pressure of the winds from south and west. You need, in

our climate, an eastern opening at the dinner-hour, dining at three, or thereabout; but beware of it after the sun has set. Don't sleep with the east wind blowing upon you. If you do, face it—let your feet receive it first. Every wind that blows has a specific quality. The east, northeast, and southeast, are all more or less pernicious, muddy, insidious, hateful. Our natural winds in midsummer are from the south and west. The south persuades you to languor, pleasantly relaxes, discourages the exertion which would be too exhaustive for the season. The west is the agitator, the thunder-storm wind, that purges and purifies; the northwest is the cleaning wind, that sweeps up the sky, and brushes off all its cobwebs. Each wind having thus a specific mission, it is wonderful that men who build know so little of the means of ventilation. Now, you see, I choose my ground with an open pine-forest in front, that is south and west and northwest. I take care that the land slopes down from me in all these directions. If there be hill, swamp, or dense thicket, I put them, with the devil, behind me. I have here chosen the very pleasantest spot in the whole encampment. There is not one of these continental officers who knows anything of the subject. Yet, to the health of an army, a difference of fifty yards in the location of a camp, is very frequently all the difference between life and death!"

And, in that broad, terrace-like spread of wood and thicket, he had chosen the most agreeable region. The pine-woods opened at his feet, and spread away almost interminably, giving the necessary degree of shade, yet leaving free passage for the wind.

"Free circulation, Geordie Dennison," said he, as with hands outspread he seemed to welcome the gentle play of the breezes reeking up from the southwest—"that is the secret of health—free circulation for the winds, the waters, and the blood. It is stagnation that is death. This is the reason why a pine-forest is more healthy than any other. It is the only forest that suffers free play to the winds. Hence you hear the music in a pine-forest which you hear in no other. The breezes pour through, and swell up, until all the tree-tops become so many organ-pipes. The vulgar notion is that there is some virtue in the odor of the pines to neutralize malaria. But this is all non-

sense. Pine-woods that have a dense undergrowth, are not more healthy than any other. It is the shape of the tree, a tall column, without lateral branches, naked a hundred feet high, and arching above, umbrella fashion, into a grand ceiling, which shuts out the intense heat of the sun, and suffers free exercise to the breeze. Here it plays with delight and impunity. In the dense thickets it trickles only, and finally stagnates; and hence the fevers of uncleared lands. Bays, swamps, ponds, are unhealthy, not because of the water which they contain, but because of the dense thickets which they nurture. The hottest place in the world in midsummer, is a deep forest or thicket, with a close undergrowth. Fools talk of decaying vegetation as the secret of disease; yet when our fevers are raging most, vegetation has not begun to decay. Gardens, fields, forests, are never more fresh and beautiful, never more vigorous and verdant, than when death seems lurking under every flower, like some venomous reptile watching for and creeping to the ear of the unconscious sleeper. But, Geordie Dennison, boy, once suppose that the air is stagnant in any locality, and you need not suppose the necessity for its impregnation by any deleterious agent. A stagnant atmosphere is, *per se*, malaria. And that fact that we can assign a distinct locality for the disease—that we can say with confidence, to sleep here is death, while you may sleep with safety within half a mile—establishes the fact conclusively that the atmosphere is localized—no matter by what cause—though even that is a matter which I have considered also—and once let the atmosphere be fixed, and it is only in degree that it differs from that of an old sink or well. It is putrid, and to inhale it is a danger. You can not impregnate with miasma any region, where the winds are allowed to penetrate freely from three points of the compass, and where they do penetrate. When we are very sickly, you will always find a pressure of winds, daily from a single quarter, for a long-continued period of time. The atmosphere loses its equilibrium, as it were; the winds lack their *balance*; and running one course only, they run into a *cul de sac*, as water that can not escape, rises to a level with its source, becomes a pond, and stagnates. A thunder-storm purifies, not from its electricity, as some contend, but because it is a storm. All storms purify because

they agitate. They disperse the local atmosphere over a thousand miles of space, and restore its equilibrium."

"But, Captain Porgy, were it not better that you should be thinking of your supper and company, instead of philosophizing here about the atmosphere?"

"It is because I am thinking of my company and supper, Master Geordie, that I do philosophize about the atmosphere. A wholesome atmosphere is half of a good supper. We can eschew the water. We need not drink that, if we can find any other liquor; but make what wry faces we will, the atmosphere we must drink, even though we know it to be impregnated with poison. Better drink the vilest ditch-water a thousand times. That may disorder the stomach, but the other must vitiate the lungs and so directly disease the blood and the heart. I am trying to teach you, sir, that in giving a good supper or dinner to your friends, you are to serve it up in properly-ventilated apartments."

"Well, we have it airy enough here."

"True; but had it been left to anybody else, ten to one you would have had our tents pitched in a villanous thicket where we never could have got a breath of air. Look, now, at the Legion encamped on the left; they are in a bottom, the breeze passing clean over their heads. Their camp-master had no idea of what was the duty to be done, beyond the simply getting room enough for the horses and wagons of some three hundred men. Sir, the partisan cavalry have never been so healthy as when I have been permitted to select the ground for their bivouac."

"That's true!"

"To be sure it's true; and you see the fruits of it in the pleasant sleeps that we enjoy, and the hardy elasticity with which we travel. There never was any people so exposed as ours have been, night and day, in all weathers, and the most wearisome marches, that have ever enjoyed such admirable health. And they owe it to me, sir—to me, Geordie Dennison—yet, d—n 'em, they are not half so grateful for this blessing as for my soups and suppers. They would readily compound to drink any quantity of malaria, if they could swallow a pint of my rum-punch after it."

"Ah, they regard the rum-punch as the antidote, and there is nothing unreasonable, therefore, in their practice. But, captain, the hour *latens*."

"*Latens*! By what right do you use that word?"

"It's a good word, captain."

"So it is; but I never heard it used before."

"Very likely; but would you permit that argument to be used against any new dish that Tom should put on the table to-night!"

"No, sir; no, Geordie, you are right. You could not have answered me better if you had argued a thousand years. And I will remember the word;—so, as the hour *latens*, Geordie, get up and help me with these tables. I must summon Frampton and Millhouse. We shall need their knives and hatchets. I have invited thirty-one guests, Geordie, not counting you and Lance; we three will make the number thirty-four. There's no such table to be spread in camp to-night. Think of it;—a simple captain of militia giving a supper to thirty guests, and upon such short commons as are allowed us. Half of the poor devils in camp think it monstrous impudent of me to give a supper at all—and to thirty persons——"

"They can't guess how it's to be done."

"No! indeed! the blockheads! But their vexation increases when they find my guests all outranking myself. The envious rascals! Beware of envy, Geordie—it is the dirtiest, sneak-ingest, meanest little passion in the world, the younger brother of vanity, furnishing all the venom to its sleek-skinned and painted senior."

"And you are to have the governor, captain?"

"Ay, he accepts. John Rutledge is a great fellow, without affectation, Geordie—no pretender—one of the few men who really do *think*. The greater number, even when they greatly rank, only repeat each other—they do not think. Thought, George Dennison, is really confined to a very few. Men, as a race, are not thinking animals. They are gregarious and imitative. They go in droves and follow a leader, whom they contrive after a while to mimic after a monkey fashion. Thought is always an individual. But—where is that boy Frampton? Sound your whistle, George."

The whistle was sounded.

"Now help me with these poles. There are forty cut. We must have crotch-sticks—two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve—it will require twenty-four; we must make our tables solid."

Lance Frampton now appeared, followed by half a dozen stout young troopers, bearing slim green poles upon their shoulders, forked sticks, and all the appliances necessary to the construction of the rustic tables and seats of the company. Long practice had made all of them familiar with the rude sort of manufacture which was required. The crotch-sticks were soon driven upright into the ground, in frequent parallels; cross pieces were laid in the crotchets of these, and the poles were stretched along, forming a crossed table with four ends, for so many dignitaries, and capable to accommodate forty guests with ease. Of a similar, but stouter fashion, were the seats for the guests. It was surprising how soon the area was filled—how soon the mechanical preparations for the feast were fashioned. The amphitheatre beneath the pines was ample. Porgy, as he boasted, had the proper eye for a locality. When reared and steadied, stanchioned and strengthened, the tables were covered with great oak-leaves, green, looking very clean, nice, and fresh—a verdant tablecloth.

"Now, see that you have torches, Lance; for, though we have a glorious moon, we need torches for the dark corners. Many of the guests will bring their negroes to wait. But we shall need some waiters besides. Engage some of these young chaps. They shall sweep the platters clean. Forget nothing, boy. We are to have big wigs to supper, remember. Geordie, come with me to *our* wagon. I think we shall astonish these epauleted gentry to-night."

And the two turned off to another part of the wood where stood the little wagon already described—a sort of covered box—a thing which one man might have rolled, but to which a couple of stout hackneys were harnessed, when taken.

"Little," said Porgy, as he unlocked the cover of the vehicle, "little did stuttering Pete dream what he lost and we gained, when we cut off the four wagons of Stewart. His eyes opened only upon the big wagons. He never gave a look at the one little one upon which I fastened—as if the most precious com-

modities were not always packed in the smallest compass! Yet, look there, Geordie."

The poet looked in:—

"Lemons, captain."

"Ay, lemons and white sugar, and nutmegs, and cloves, and spices of all sorts, and an anchor of Geneva, and a box of cocoa, and a bag of coffee, and a good supply of old Jamaica, and, see you that keg?—tongues, beef-tongues, English beef-tongues. Now please you to read the name on the cover; ay! Lord Rawdon's own prog, by the pipers, specially selected for his table and palate. We shall astonish these wooden-headed continentals to-night, Geordie! won't we? You thought me mad, didn't you, when I invited so many? But I knew what I was about. They shall stare, they shall sup, though they lament for ever, after the acquisition of such a taste as their vulgar fortunes can never hereafter satisfy. But mum! Not a word in anticipation."

And Porgy closed the wagon with haste and locked it, as half a dozen troopers lounged carelessly by, looking, with some curiosity as they passed, to the proceedings of the two.

"Stay here, Geordie, and keep watch till I return. I must put Millhouse on duty over this wagon, or there will be a Flemish account of its contents when supper's called. The morals of the dragoon service, imply theft as a necessity. A good scout has all the capabilities of a good pickpocket."

And, moralizing as he went, Porgy hurried off for succor. Dennison was relieved by Millhouse, a one-armed trooper of iron aspect, and as stubborn of purpose as a mule. The wagon was safe in his keeping as long as his left arm could lift sabre or pistol—and he was duly armed with both.

The next visit of our host was to Tom, the cook, who had a precinct of his own, some twenty-five yards from the spot where the tables had been spread. The terrapin soup was discussed, the *ragout*; the stew; the boiled tongues; nothing escaped attention. Then, a survey was taken of the crockery; the bowls, plates, dishes; the knives and forks; the spoons of iron, the drinking vessels of delph, tin, or calabash. These commodities were too frail of character, not to need the greatest care and attention; and every feast given by our captain, mortified

him with the slenderness of his resources. But there was no remedy. If half a dozen good bowls of delph, and platters of tin, could be provided for the more distinguished guests, the rest might surely be satisfied with clean calabashes. We will suppose our captain satisfied in respect to these things. He was in the midst of the examination, however, venting his annoyances at his limited resources, in uneasy exclamations, when a messenger from Rutledge brought him the note from that personage apprizing him that Greene and Lee would appear among his guests. The governor wrote:—

“I shall take the liberty, my dear Captain Porgy, of bringing with me a couple of additional guests, in General Greene and Colonel Lee, knowing that your provision will not only be ample, but that the taste which usually presides over your banquets will give to our friends from Rhode Island and Virginia such a notion of the tastes of Apicius and Lucullus, as certainly never yet dawned upon them in their own half-civilized regions. Your own courtesy will do the rest and will, I trust, sufficiently justify the confidence with which I have insisted upon their coming.

“Yours,

“JOHN RUTLEDGE.”

“Humph!” exclaimed Porgy, “I should not have ventured to ask General Greene, not that I stand in awe of his epaulettes, but it is so rare to find a *parvenu* who would not hold such an invitation from a poor captain of militia, to be a piece of impertinence and presumption. Our own folks know me too well to exhibit any such *gaucherie*. As for Lee, he is a popinjay! I should never ask him myself; but have no objection that he should occasionally appear among gentlemen who can teach him, by example, how gentlemen can be good fellows without any loss of dignity.—Geordie—your pen and a scrap of paper. I hope I diminish none of your verses by consuming your foolscap.”

The pen and paper were had, and our captain wrote:—

“Governor Rutledge can take no liberty for the propriety of which his name is not a sufficient guaranty. Captain Porgy will be most happy to welcome any guests whom he may think proper to bring.”

This written, he handed it to the messenger. It was then

that Greene's cook uncovered a small tumbril or box in a wheelbarrow, containing the uncooked provisions which had been destined for his own table. Porgy looked at the bloody and livid meats with unqualified disgust.

"But," said he *sotto voce*, "we can't reject them. Here, Tom."

The cook appeared, apron in front and knife in hand.

"Tom, take charge of these provisions. They are sent by the general—General Greene, do you hear? Use them. Cook them. Turn them into soup, hash, steak, what you will!" then, as the messengers of Rutledge and Greene disappeared—"but d—m you, boy, don't let them show themselves upon my table. The meat is villanously butchered. That alone should condemn it. Make it up for some of these young fellows that have been working for us. And—Tom—"

"Well, maussa—talk quick."

"Don't forget the balls. Let there be a plenty in the soup."

"Psho, maussa, enty I know."

"Enough! Begone!"

The active mind of our corpulent captain began to grow restless. He had seen to everything that he could think of, and grew peevish from nothing to do. Suddenly he stuck his fingers into his hair.

"No! the vessels for the punch; Geordie. By heavens, I had almost forgotten. Let us after the punchbowls, and then for the manufacture. *You* are good at that; a poet should be. Curious problem, Geordie—the affinity between poetry and the bottle."

"Not at all. It only implies the ardency of the poet. It is so with the orator. You never saw poet or orator yet, that was not ardent and fond of the juices of the grape."

"Not the didactic orders, surely. But how is it, then, that Bacchus is not your deity instead of Apollo?"

"Because Apollo, with virtues of his own, includes those of Bacchus. He is a ripener of Bacchus, and loves not the wine less, nor is less the true god of it, because he employs a vintner. I see no difficulty in the matter."

"And, perhaps, there is none. Yet what would Apollo say, or Bacchus even, to such a punchbowl as ours."

And he pointed to an enormous calabash, holding a couple

of gallons at the least, that, duly valued and taken care of, had survived all the vicissitudes of the campaign.

"They would, either of them, feel that there was wholesome propriety in the vessel. It is one which Ceres has presented for the occasion, to a kindred deity. Boon nature has provided where vulgar art has failed. It would be much more staggering to either of the ancient gods to try them with the Jamaica, instead of the blood of Tuscany."

"Ah! they never got such liquor on Olympus. Their nectar was a poor wishy-washy sort of stuff, of not more body than some of those thin vaporeing French and German liquors, of which we have had a taste occasionally. Their wine of 'Tuscany, nay, the Falernian of Horace, would not take rank now-a-days with the juices of the common corn, prepared according to our process. Drinking whiskey or Jamaica, Nero might have been a fool, a wretch, a murderer—might fire his city or butcher his mother—might have committed any crime, but cowardice! Whiskey or Jamaica might have saved Rome from Gaul and Vandal. The barbarians, be sure, drank the most potent beverages."

"A notion deserving of study. We drink deep now-a-days. Will our descendants beat us? Will they laugh at our potations, which rarely leave a gentleman on his legs after midnight?"

"Ah! say nothing of our progeny. Do not build upon the degenerates. It may be that the milksops will fancy it bad taste, nay, even immoral, on the part of their ancestors, to have swallowed Jamaica or whiskey at all. In proportion as their heads are weak, will they pronounce ours vicious; and just because we have a certain amount of strength in our virtue—a certain quality of brawn and blood and muscle, to keep our sentiment from etherealizing—growing into mere thin air—will they presume to stroke their beards in self-complaisant satisfaction, thanking God that such poor *publicans*, have given way to a more saintly race of sinners. I am half inclined to thank my stars that, when I disappear, the race of Porgy will not be continued in the person of one who prides himself upon having no head—for a bottle!"

"Yes! save us from all degenerate children. But, captain, will this *one* calabash of punch suffice for forty? Impossible.

Two gallons among forty! Never in the world! Why, sir, there are three generals, and one governor, a score of colonels, and others of inferior rank, who are emulous of great men's virtues. Two gallons to forty such persons."

"Oh! don't stop to calculate. Luckily there are two calabashes."

And the little wagon yielded up the desired article.

"Make it rich, Geordie."

"Captain Porgy, when they drink of this liquor, each man will feel that his will has been made. He will feel that he has no more care in life—will fold his robes about him for flight."

"Or fall! Well, give us a taste. I profess to be a very competent judge of what a good Jamaica punch should be."

Smacks his lips.

"The proportions are good: the acid has yielded to the embrace of the sugar with the recognition of a perfect faith, and both succumb to the spirit, as with the recognition of a perfect deity. Next to poetry, Geordie, you are an adept at punch."

Geordie somewhat proudly:—

"Yes, captain, on this score I feel safe. I am not always certain of my verses. I sometimes feel that they lack the sweet and the ardent—but I am never doubtful of the perfect harmony that prevails among all the elements when I manufacture punch."

Porgy quaffs off the contents of the *dipper*.

"Geordie, you are a benefactor. When this war ceases, you shall partake my fortunes. You shall live with me; and, between punch and poetry, we will make the latter end of life a felicitous *finale* to a very exciting drama. By the way, Geordie, talking of poetry and punch reminds me. You must be prepared with something good to-night. I shall have you out. You shall give us some heroic ballad. I know you have not been drowsing in that thicket for nothing. Have you got anything ready?"

"I *have* been doing a trifle, but —"

"None of your buts. Get aside, and memorize it. These two vessels of punch, meanwhile, we will put under lock and key, and yield to the guardianship of Sergeant Millhouse."

CHAPTER XLVI.

HOW PORGY FEASTED THE CAPTAINS.

WITH vulgar people, a dinner party is the occasion of much fuss and fidgeting. The vulgar egotism is always on the *qui vive* lest something should go wrong—lest something should be wanting to the proper effect—lest, in brief, some luckless excess or deficiency should certainly convey to the guest the secret of those deficiencies, in taste, manners, experiences, and resources, which would, if known, be fatal to the claims of good breeding and high ton which the host is most anxious to establish. Those, on the contrary, who feel assured on such points are apt to take the events of a dinner-table coolly and with comparative indifference. A blunder or a deficiency of steward or servant, occasions little or no concern; is never allowed to disturb the equilibrium of the master, who takes for granted that such small matters will be ascribed, by every sensible guest, to the right cause; and for the opinion of all other persons he cares not a button.

The result of this equanimity is to enable him to keep *his mind "in hand"* for the entertainment of his company. He is able to observe and to minister with promptness and full resource, as his wits are not disordered by any feverish workings of his *amour propre*. He sees what is wanting at a glance; supplies the deficiency with a nod; his servants are duly taught in the value of his nod and glance; and the skill of the host, by which the guests are diverted, enables Jack and Gill to wipe up the water which they have spilt so awkwardly, in their uphill progress, without attracting any notice—without filling the scene with most admired disorder.

Our host *knows* his company, and conjures up the special topic which appeals directly to the tastes or the fancies of each.

He is vigilant even while he seems most at ease ; when his indifference is most apparent, it is made to cover a becoming solicitude for the comfort of the humblest person present. He provides himself with the proper cue to all your prejudices and affections, as by a divine instinct, so that he steers clear of the one, and shapes his course directly for the other ; and when the waters are unluckily ruffled, by some bull-headed companion, who treads on his neighbor's toes without even suspecting that he has corns, our host is at hand to pour oil upon the troubled waters, and soothe to calm the temper which is ruffled. He contrives, at the same time, that the offender shall be taught the nature of his offence, without being brought up to the halberds and set in pillory,

" Pour les encourager les autres."

There was nothing doubtful about the *aplomb* of Captain Porgy. Having prepared his feast according to the full extent of his resources ; drilled his awkward squad to the utmost of his capacity and their susceptibilities ; seen that they were in sufficient numbers for proper attendance ; and made, in brief, all his preparations, he gave himself no further concern, but prepared to receive his guests, with the easy good nature, the frank politeness, the smiling grace, of an old-school gentleman. And it is quite an error to talk, as we are apt to do, of the formality of the old-school gentleman. The gentleman of two hundred or one hundred years ago, differed very slightly in his bearing from the same class at the present day. In due degree as his ceremonials ran into formalities, did he lose the character of the gentleman. In no period was mere form and buckram ever confounded, by sensible people, with politeness and refinement.

Never was gentleman more perfectly at ease in crowded assembly, yet more solicitous of the claims of all about him, than our corpulent captain. His shrewd good sense, nice tastes, playful humors, and frank spirit, all harmonizing happily, enabled him to play the host generally to the equal satisfaction of all his company. He had the proper welcome for each as he drew nigh ; the proper word, which set each person at his ease, and prepared him for the development of all his conversational resources.

Among the first of his guests to appear were Governor Rutledge and General Greene. "The really great," said Porgy to Lance Frampton who stood behind him, "never keep the table waiting."

The approach to the scene was through a great natural avenue of lofty green pines, through which the moon was peeping curiously with a bright smile, a disinterested spectator of the proceedings. Music timed the approaches of the guests, the army band having been secured for the evening. Porgy welcomed his guests at the entrance of the area in which his tables had been spread.

"General Greene, Captain Porgy," said Rutledge. Greene took the outstretched hand of the host, saying:—

"What I have heard of you, Captain Porgy, makes me trespass without fear of the consequences."

"And what I know of General Greene enables me to welcome him with every hope of the consequences. I am very grateful to Governor Rutledge for doing that which, as a poor captain of militia, I should scarcely have ventured to do myself."

"I knew my customers both, my dear captain," said Rutledge, "and knew how little was necessary to render the regular and volunteer service grateful to each other."

"Be seated, gentlemen," said Porgy, "while I put myself on duty for a while;" and he resumed his place at the opening of the avenue, while Sumter, Marion, and the rest severally presented themselves, were welcomed and conducted to the interior by young Frampton, who did the duties of an aid. Colonel Lee was among the latest to appear.

"My dear Porgy," said he condescendingly—"I am late; but the cavalry of the legion is on vigilant duty to-night, and a good officer you know—eh!"

And he left it to our host to conceive the rest.

"Col. Lee may be forgiven, if late among his friends, when we know that his enemies rarely reproach him for a like remissness."

The grace of Porgy's manner happily blended with the grave dignity of his address. Lee smiled at the compliment:—

"Always ready, Porgy—never to be outdone in the play of compliment, or the retort courteous;" and while speaking he was ushered in with other visitors.

The company was at length assembled. The music ceased. A single bugle sounded from the amphitheatre, and the guests disposed themselves without confusion under the whispered suggestions of Lieutenant Frampton. Porgy took his place at the head of the table, standing, till all were seated.

"Gentlemen," said he, "be pleased to find places at the board. Colonel Singleton, you are my *vis-a-vis*. Governor Rutledge will you honor me by sitting at my right. General Greene, I have presumed to assign you the seat at my left."

Right and left of Singleton, Marion and Sumter were placed. At one end of the table crossing the centre of the board, Colonel Lee was seated, Colonel Maham occupied the other. Carrington, Horry, Mellichampe, St. Julien, and others found places between these several termini. Scarcely had they been seated when four great calabash tureens were placed severally at the extremities, the odorous vapors from which appealed gratefully to every nostril in company.

"Turtle soup!" was the delighted murmur.

"And lemons!"

And as the smoking vessels were set before the governor and General Greene, the former exclaimed:—

"Faith, Captain Porgy, your last voyage to the West Indies seems to have been a highly prosperous adventure."

"In truth," said Greene, "I am half inclined to think that there must have been some such enterprise, of which General Marion has forgotten to apprise me."

"I begin seriously to suspect him," said Rutledge. "The fact is that General Marion is so fond of secret enterprises, and audacious ones—does things with so much despatch, and thinks it so easy to do the impossible, that I half believe he has made a three nights' run for the Havana, or sent off a favorite squad on a sortie in that direction. Say, general, is it not so? Let us know the truth of it. You found, among your captures at Georgetown, some ready-rigged sloop or schooner, and sent her out on a cruise in anticipation of this very occasion."

"Nay, governor, the merits of the enterprise, such as it was, and the fruits thereof, are due entirely to our host. It was his adventure wholly, though we share the spoils."

"But, where—where—where—" began Peter Horry, stut-

tering, "where the devil did he—did he—get 'em—turtles and lemons! I don't—don't—understand it—at all."

"Better not press the inquiry, Horry," said Singleton with a sly smile upon the company—"the discovery will hardly add to your own laurels."

"How—my laurels! What—what—I want to—to know—have my laurels—to do—to do—with the matter?"

"Let's have it, Colonel Singleton," said Rutledge eagerly. "Out with the story. Colonel Horry is so seldom to be caught napping that I shall rejoice to have one story at his expense."

"Ay, ay, the story, Singleton," from a dozen voices around the board.

"Tell—tell—tell, if you will," stuttered Horry—"only be sure, and tell—the—the truth, and shame—you know—who."

"The adventure illustrates the military character of the two gentlemen most admirably," said Singleton. "Colonel Horry is a gentleman of large eyes and grapples with objects of magnitude always. It is Captain Porgy's pleasure to be discriminating and select. The lemons and a variety of other edibles are furnished, unwillingly, I grant you, by Lord Rawdon himself. They form a part of the supplies brought up by Colonel Stewart. In dashing at Stewart's convoy, Horry passed a mean little wagon in the rear, as quite unworthy his regards. He swept off as you know three or four others of considerable value to the army. But the very littleness of this wagon which Horry had despised, fixed the regards of our host. He quietly possessed himself of it, and was rewarded with the private stores designed for Lord Rawdon himself." The story produced a laugh at the expense of Horry.

"Who—who—who—the devil," said he, would have thought—of—of—anything good in—that rickety concern? I'd like to know, Captain Porgy, what you got besides the lemons?"

"White sugars, coffee, tea, spices, Spanish sweetmeats, preserved ginger, three kegs of Jamaica, and a goodly variety besides!"

"The d—l!—and—and—I to miss 'em all."

"But you got loads of bacon and flour, Horry."

"Several bales of blankets."

"Ay, and a bathing-tub and complete set of chamber crockery!"

"What," said Rutledge, "was there a bathing-tub and chamber crockery?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Who could have wanted that, I wonder?"

"Some young ensign of the buffs or blues," said Porgy, "whose mother was duly considerate of the young man's skin in a warm climate. You should have discovered Colonel Horry's visage when that wagon was burst open and the contents revealed. The bathing-tub and furniture filled the wagon."

"What did he say, Porgy? Tell us that!"

"Say! Ah! What was it, colonel? Deliver it yourself: nobody can repeat it half so well."

"Re—re—repeat it yourself, if you can!" said Horry stuttering and dipping up his soup with increased rapidity.

"Out with it, Captain Porgy. Horry's speech."

Porgy nodded to Singleton, who answered:—

"I heard it, and as Horry permits will deliver it. He said, stamping his feet in a rage: 'Throw out the d——d basins, and break up the blasted tub. Who would have thought of any fellow being such a bloody booby as to bring a bathing-tub and chamber crockery into a pond and bush country?'"

And slightly imitating the stammer of Horry so as to give a lively idea of his manner, Singleton set the table in a roar. When the laugh had subsided:—

"But did he break up the crockery, Porgy?"

"Every bowl and basin. He was merciless. You never saw such havoc. His broadsword played elephant in the crockery shop to perfection, and the dragoons, delighted with the humors of their colonel, went into the work of demolition with a rush."

"I had—no—no—no use for the d——d—d——d—d——d things," said Horry; "and I was—de—de—de—terminated to give the d——d puppy that owned them a lesson."

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"But where did the turtles come from?"

"From the genius of my cook, Tom," said Porgy. "The turtle are terrapin from the Caw-caw."

"Not the alligator terrapin, captain, I hope," said Sumter. "I could never bring myself to eat any of that order."

"You have done it on this occasion," said Porgy.

"And very effectually too, general," said Singleton, "since I have helped you to a second supply, and you seem in a fair way to need a third."

Sumter looked a little blank.

"Do not be discomfited, general," said Porgy, "since I took the precaution to have all their tails cut off before they were hashed up for the soup."

"But what did you do with the tails?"

"Ah! they were made into balls, with a due proportion of beef and bacon."

"You have caught me beyond escape, captain, since I confess to have done as much execution on the balls as on the soup."

"And you are surprised into a wisdom, general, that has cured you of the prejudices of twenty years! What we call the alligator terrapin is the best of the tribe—the fattest, richest, best flavored. It requires only that skill in the dressing which my man Tom supplies."

The bugle sounded. Sergeant Millhouse marshalled the waiters to their stations, and the emptied vessels were removed. With another blast of the bugle, new dishes were set on the table.

"A noble-looking fish," said Greene. "What fish is this, Captain Porgy?"

"The greatest delicacy of a fresh-water river, this is the Edisto blue cat—for very nice people a most discouraging name.—Gentlemen, look to yourselves. Here is boiled fish, such as George the Third can not procure; dressed in a style which would not discredit the table of our great ally, the king of France. Men of *gout* will of course prefer the boiled—for the undeveloped taste, the fry is abundant. There are perch and trout in those several dishes. They are all fresh from the Edisto within five hours."

"Your troopers have been busy, captain."

"Ay, sir, and my cook. He was fortunate in his search along the river this morning, to come upon three or four fish-traps, which he emptied without leave. Governor, the melted

butter is beside you. By-the-way, those naval biscuit are also from the stores of my Lord Rawdon.—General, do not dream of defiling that fish with vinegar. It is an abomination in this case. The fish only entreats the butter, and the dressing is complete.”

The eye of Porgy swept the table. The guests discussed the fish with the relish of starving men. There was a cessation. The finger of Porgy was lifted. Millhouse’s bugle gave tongue, and the fish was superseded with a variety of dishes.

“General Greene—Governor Rutledge—suffer me to persuade you both to the ragout which is before me.”

“What is it, captain?”

“Try it, general. It is the alerta—the green alerta—a sort of chicken you will find it, but far superior. The stew is of the *lagarta*, according to the Spaniards, and a dish quite as rare as exquisite on table. Gentlemen, interspersed with these dishes you will find more familiar, but inferior ones. There are hams and tongues, both from the stores of Lord Rawdon, and, in fact, most of this course will be found of foreign character. You will please ask me for no more revelations touching my mode of procuring supplies, as I have no wish to expose the breaking of any more crockery. It is not every one of our partisans who can bear, with so much equanimity as Colonel Horry, the story of his own acquisitions, and how made.”

“This—what do you call it?” said Greene.

“Alerta!”

“Is delicious!”

“And nothing could be more savory than this stew, Captain Porgy.”

“Yes, indeed, governor—the Spaniards have the merit of the discovery. But gentlemen, with this course, it is time to spiritualize the feast.”

The speaker’s finger was uplifted, and two enormous bowls of punch were set down at the two ends of the table.

“Gentlemen, we owe a great deal to the providence of Lord Rawdon.”

“And the improvidence of Horry,” whispered Rutledge, “for, of a verity, had he captured these spoils, he would never have made the same use of them as our host has done.”

"Sir," said Porgy with solemnity, "he would have wasted them—naked, upon his dragoons.—Gentlemen, you will please fill for a sentiment. Colonel Singleton see that your end of the table charges duly."

"We are ready, captain."

Porgy rising:—

"Gentlemen, our first regular sentiment: 'The cause of Liberty—the cause of the American continent—the cause of all continents wherever man has a living soul!'"

"Music." And the bands struck up.

"Captain Porgy," said Lee, "send me, if you please, a second supply of that dish which you call the alerta. I don't know what sort of bird it is, but the savor is that of young pigeons. It is wonderfully nice."

"I agree with you, Lee," said Colonel Williams, "though I have no more idea what the bird is than of the mansions of the moon. Let me trouble you also, Captain Porgy."

"I must also trespass, captain," said Carrington. "Ordinarily, I seldom suffer myself to eat of dishes of which I know nothing; but these foreign meats come to us under good guaranties, though half the time without a name at all."

"Unless French, which is so much Greek to me," said Maham. "Captain, that *lagarta* stew is princely."

—"No crowned head in Europe enjoys the like. Shall I help you, Colonel Maham?"

"Thank you, yes. But I thought you called it foreign."

"So it is—in one sense; but this is not imported. It is wholly domestic."

"Well, foreign or domestic, it is first rate," said Greene. "I will try a little more of it, Captain Porgy."

"Ah! general,"—with a smile—"suffer me to say that it is only in the militia service, after all, that the taste properly refines. Governor, shall I serve you?"

"Thank you, I will mince a little of your *lagarta*, captain," and a sly glance of Rutledge apprized the captain of his suspicions. But the face of Porgy made no revelations.

"Gentlemen," said Singleton, at the other end of the table, "fill your glasses."

"Ready, all," said Porgy.

Singleton rose, and gave :—

“South Carolina—almost freed from the footstep of the foreign tyrant, and rising to the full assertion of her own sovereignty !”

A brilliant burst from John Rutledge, brief, but like a fiery tongue speaking to the soul, followed this sentiment; and the music rose into a triumphant peal as his voice died away upon the echoes. Other sentiments succeeded other speeches; Rutledge, Greene, Marion, Sumter, Lee, were all duly honored with toasts, and all responded, each after his own fashion, all unaffectedly, simply, and with the proper earnestness of soldiers. And the punch flowed anew into fresh goblets, and the merriment grew high, and some of the grave barons began to sing in snatches, and the volunteer toasts filled up the pauses in the conversation. Meanwhile, a score of melons were placed upon the board, and the preserved fruits from the West Indies, guava and ginger, were crowded upon the board, and provoked new merriment at the expense of Rawdon, who lost, and Horry who refused to find the prize.

And while they gashed deeply the purple centres of the melons, Rutledge suddenly said to Porgy :—

“And now, captain, that you have had your triumph, that all present have borne testimony in the least equivocal manner to the merits of your feast, I would fain know of what those foreign dishes were compounded, of which, knowing nothing, all have partaken so freely. Hams and tongues, fresh from Britain, designed for my Lord Rawdon’s own table, have been sent away from yours uncut—proof of homage, the most profound, to yet preferable meats. Pray tell us, then, what were the elements of your *lagarta* and your *alerta*—your *ragouts* and stews.”

“Ay, ay,” seconded the company, “let us know. What were the birds?”

“I should really be pleased to know, Captain Porgy,” said General Greene, bowing, “touching those birds.”

“There need be no mystery in it now, general, since, as Governor Rutledge says, the feast has triumphed. But I am afraid I shall too greatly confound you, when I state that the dishes contained no birds at all. The stew of *alerta* was com-

pounded chiefly of the race which helped Homer in the construction of an epic—a race which Milton describes as the—

“‘Small infantry
Warred on by cranes.’”

“You surely do not mean *frogs*, Captain Porgy?” cried Lee, with affected horror in his accents.

“Your guess is a sagacious one, and worthy of the legion, Colonel Lee.”

“Good heavens! and is it come to this, that the soldiers of liberty should be reduced to the necessity of frog-eating?”

“Necessity, Colonel Lee!” exclaimed Rutledge. “By heavens, sir, it should be matter of taste and preference, sir, if only in due deference to our great Gallic ally; but, of a truth, sir, after to-day’s feast, it should be a new argument in behalf of liberty, that she has brought us to such rare fine feeding and such improved tastes.”

“And the other dish, Captain Porgy,” demanded Sumter, “the stew with the Spanish name?”

“The name speaks for itself—*lagarta*. It is of the great lizard family—the cayman—in vulgar speech, the alligator. But the specimens employed, gentlemen, were mere juveniles; young vagabonds, whose affectionate parents had hardly suffered them out of sight before. They had probably never fed on larger prey than their neighbors of the alerta family.”

“One question, Captain Porgy,” said Carrington; “be so good as to inform me, if, among your several unfamiliar dishes, I have had the happiness to eat of the rattlesnake, the viper, the moccasin, or the boa-constrictor?”

“Alas! colonel, I grieve to say that you have not. I should have been pleased to have got a couple of young chicken-snakes, but I was not fortunate in the search. We got glimpse of a few runners [black-snakes], but they were quite too swift of foot for the hunters. The chicken-snake is of unexceptionable tenderness; the runner is a little too muscular, if not previously well sodden; but, unless near a hencoop, or a corncrib, it is not easy to find the chicken-snake. I repeat my regrets that I could not secure this delicacy for my table. But another time, Colonel Carrington, should you sup with me, I will make a special effort in your behalf.”

"I thank you, sir; do not suffer your regrets to disturb you. For that matter, I am half doubtful whether your *alerta* and *lagarta*, of which I have, in my ignorance, partaken somewhat too freely, will continue to lie lightly on my soul or stomach."

"Have no fears, sir; and the better to secure their repose, do me the honor, sir, of a bowl of punch with me. Gentlemen, I entreat the whole table to our companionship."

And the vessels were filled and emptied.

"And now, gentlemen," continued the host, I give you—'The poets, who minister at once to Apollo, to Bacchus, and to Mars, and beg to introduce you to the only representative of the faculty in our squadron, Mr. George Dennison, my ensign. If I mistake not, he has been this day as busy with the muse, as I with my cook; and, if we will suffer him, he will bring us gifts from Parnassus not unworthy of those which we have enjoyed from the provision-wagon of Lord Rawdon."

"In which Horry, going from Dan to Beersheba, could see nothing."

"Having a taste for baths, warming-pans, and chamber-furniture."

"'Nough of that—that—Singleton! I—I—I'm a sinner be—be—beyond salvation, if I ever pass a little mean-looking wagon again, without seeing what's in it."

"But—Mr. Dennison," said Rutledge.

"George! Geordie!" said Porgy, good-humoredly. The poet, hitherto the only silent person at table, now rose—a tall, slender person, of bright, lively eye, mouth full of expression, Grecian nose, and great forehead rising up like a tower. His cheeks were flushed, his frame trembled, and there was an evident quivering of the lip which was discernible to every eye about him. Dennison sang the verses, which he wrote, in a clear, military voice, shrill like a clarion. There was, perhaps, no great deal of music in his composition, but enough for the present purpose, and of the kind best suited, perhaps, for a military gathering—bold, free, eager and full of animation. His ballad had been the work of that very afternoon.

He had no prefaces. But, waiting till the music hushed, and the voices, he then began:—

THE BATTLE FEAST.

To the-dark and bloody feast,
 Haste ye battle vultures, haste;
 There is banquet, man and beast,
 For your savage taste:
 Never on such costly wassail
 Did ye flesh your beaks before;
 Come, ye slaves of Hesse Cassel,*
 To be sold no more!

Small your cost to George of Britain,
 One and sixpence sterling down;†
 Yet for this, ye sorry chapmen,
 Each will lose his crown;
 Freedom knows no price for valor,
 Yours is measured by the groat,
 Britain pays in gold and silver,
 We in steel and shot.

Recreants, ye from Scottish Highlands,‡
 Lately rebels to the throne
 Of that brutal foreign despot,
 Now, whose sway ye own;
 Ye are welcome to the banquet,
 Which is spread for all who come,
 Where the eater is the eaten,
 And the deathsman goes to doom.

And ye braggart sons of Erin,
 Loathing still the sway ye bear,
 Groaning in the very fetters,
 Ye would make us wear;
 Ever writhing, ever raging,
 'Neath the bonds ye can not break—
 Here the bloody banquet woos ye,
 Gather and partake!

* The Hessians, hired at so much per head to the crown of Britain, for the war in America, formed no small portion of the British army.

† We are not sure that Master George Dennison is altogether right in this statement of the hire of the Hessians per head, but the difference is immaterial, whether in poetry or history.

‡ The exiled rebels of '45, when settled in America, almost wholly proved adherents of that monarch whom, as followers of the Stuarts, they opposed to the knife. The disasters of '45 cured them of all propensity to rebellion. Even the Macdonalds, the famous Hector—Flora who saved the Pretender—all became loyal to George the Third in America, and fought against the patriots.

Stoop, ye vultures, to the issue,
 It will be ere set of sun!
 Mark whose valor bides the longest,
 Blood of price or blood of none:
 Comes the Tartan of Glenorchy,
 Comes the sullen Saxon boor,
 Comes the light-heeled German yager,
 Crowding to the shore!

Who shall meet them by the water,
 On the mountain, in the vale,
 Meet them with the stroke of slaughter,
 Till the right arm fail?
 Wherefore ask? Yon pealing summons,
 Finds fit answer, sharp and soon,
 Answer fit for peers and commons,
 Yager and dragoon.

Lo! the soul that makes a nation,
 Which, from out the ranks of toil,
 Upward springs in day of peril,
 Soul to save the soil!
 Comes a high and mighty aspect,
 From the shores of Powhatan;—
 Lo! in him the nation's hero,
 Glorious perfect man!*

Follows, rugged as his mountains,
 Daring man from Bennington;†
 Blacksmith stout from Narraganset,‡
 Good where deeds are done:
 Comes the keen-eyed Santee rifle,
 Sleepless still and swift as flame,
 Rowel rashing,§ bullet winging||
 Man of deadly aim.

Stoop, ye vultures, to the issue,
 Stoop, and scour the bloody plain;
 Flesh your beaks where fat the carnage,
 Mountains up the slain:
 Whose the skull your talon rendeth;
 Eye, within your dripping beak,
 Speechless tongue that loosely lolleth
 On divided cheek!

In the tartan of Glenorchy,
 Scarlet of the Saxon boor,

* Washington.

† Stark.

‡ Greene.

§ Sumter.

|| Marion.

Gray frock of the Hessian yager
Strewn from mount to shore;
Read the fate of hireling valor,
Read the doom of foreign foe,
Know that he who smites for freedom,
Ever strikes the deadly blow!

It was in the midst of the compliments of the party to the poet, that Willie Sinclair stole in to the table, and plucked the sleeve of Marion, who rose quickly and quietly, and went out with him in silence. The company sat at the table some time longer.

"Why your poet seems a genuine Birserker, Captain Porgy. This chant was worthy to be sung in the hall of Odin. Does he fight as bravely as he sings."

"Every bit, sir, and he goes into battle with the same convulsive sort of tremor with which he begins to sing or to recite. But that passes off in a few moments, and then he fairly rages. In fact, sir, it is not easy for him to arrest himself, and he sometimes shows himself rather too savage in strife—with rather too great an appetite for blood."

"You are as fortunate, Captain Porgy, in your poet as your cook; I would I could persuade them from you!—Who?—Do you say?"

These last words were spoken to Lieutenant Frampton, who had whispered something into Rutledge's ear.

"Colonel Sinclair, your excellency. He waits you without, along with General Marion."

"Instantly"—and, watching his opportunity, while beakers were filling, Rutledge stole away. Greene followed his example, so did Sumter and the elder officers; the young ones remained, and soon Captain Porgy, his veneration no longer active, was in full flight, keeping the table in a roar, with merry jest, jibe, and story, till the hours grew something smaller than the stars, and the moon had a hooded, downcast looking visage, as if she had seen or heard something to shock her modesty. Let us leave the revellers while they make a final onslaught upon the punchbowls.

CHAPTER XLVII.

SCENE CLOSES IN CLOUD AND MYSTERY.

It is a necessary law of our existence that we are not allowed to have things just as we wish them. Life runs not more smoothly than love. The course of both is broken with frequent impediments, if only in order that the stream should possess a due degree of vitality for its own strength and purification. We are not allowed to feel secure, at any moment, in our possession, or in the full realization of our favorite purposes. Use all precautions, exercise all our vigilance, assert duly all our resources of thought and genius, and still we find ourselves thwarted by impediments which we are rarely able to foresee, and not often able to contend with.

Willie Sinclair had proved himself as circumspect, vigilant and industrious as brave. He had cheerfully gone to his tasks and these were as various as exacting. He had calmly undertaken the most perilous situations, and had encountered their difficulties and dangers with an ability which had resulted, thus far, in the most perfect success, in all those respects which concerned the interests of the army and the country. He had won the admiration even of such admirable judges and performers as Rutledge and Marion. But in his personal fortunes—in respect to those interests which concerned his individual sympathies and affections—everything had gone wrong. He had offended his father by his patriotism—had still further offended him, by suffering his heart to go astray into pastures which were forbidden—and now the added mortification of seeing the object of his affections, and all her family, involved in dangers, including sundry forms of peril, while in his keeping partially, and mostly because of their connection with himself;—in this lay the chief sting of his present suffering.

He had failed utterly in his search after Bertha and her mother. They had left no traces which he could light upon. Such as he had followed, had only deluded him from the right path; and he returned to camp in despair. He had lost every clue to the pursuit. For the moment, he appeared unmanned; and when he had reported the results of his expedition to Marion, it required all the ingenuity of the famous partisan to inspirit him. Not that he was disposed to forego future exertion in the pursuit of his object. That was the one purpose which he had in contemplation; and when he summoned his general out to a conference, it was with the view to obtaining the desired permission to continue his search after the family of Travis, without regard to the action of the army.

Marion fully sympathized with the natural grief and apprehension of our hero. He knew, just as well as anybody else, what should be the apprehensions felt for the safety of Mrs. Travis and her daughter—to say nothing of the father and son. He knew the wild outlawry ranging through the country; the reckless brutality of the refugees on both sides; the cold and savage nature of Inglehardt; the dangers which threatened male and female equally of the scattered family. But he had his consolations. He gave Sinclair a full report of the resolves made in council, and mentioned the fact that, with Greene's permission, Rutledge had reserved himself (Sinclair) with the corps of St. Julien, for special duties, which he had yet kept private.

"I have no question, major, that the governor has done so in order to give you *carte blanche*, with special reference to the Travis family. But here he comes."

Rutledge appeared at the remark, and shook Sinclair's hand with affectionate sympathy.

"Come further this way, general," said he. And they retired to a fallen tree on the edge of a thicket, and there seated themselves. "You have been unsuccessful, Sinclair?"

"Wholly so, governor."

"No clues?"

"None, sir! I followed such only as misled me. I have not the the slightest idea what course now to pursue. I have no traces of the party, and no plans."

"Ideas," said Rutledge, cheerily, "do not obey the will! They come without premeditation. You may not have them to-night, but they will come with the morning. You know not how wonderful is sleep, in giving freedom to conjecture. You are exhausted. You have not slept;—with such a state of your nervous system, to think would be impossible."

And he felt the pulse of the dragoon officer as he spoke, and looked into his eyes.

"Your nervous system is out of order. You have neither slept nor supped. You must do both, or you will be sick. Your tone is enfeebled. You must especially exert your will, if you would be usefully active. Hear me, colonel—and by the way, here is your commission. You will do me the honor to accept this proof of my high appreciation of your recent services."

Sinclair bowed as he took the paper.

"Hear me, Sinclair. You are physically weak, mentally suffering—morally and physically prostrated. If you do not bring up your body, by the exercise of your mind, you will have fever in twenty-four hours. Now, my dear fellow, do you conceive the mischief of that fever? It will incapacitate you for this search after the Travis family! I have set my heart on this search, which can be executed by nobody so well as yourself. That damsel, Bertha Travis, and her excellent mother, succeeded in the brief meeting which I had with them, in twining themselves about my heart. I am resolved that you shall recover them! For this purpose, anticipating—or holding as possible—your present failure, I obtained General Marion's consent to the appropriation, to my own object, of your services and those of Captain St. Julien with his troop. You are to enjoy a roving commission; moving at your own discretion, and only required to co-operate with General Sumter's command when occasion offers. Now, my dear Sinclair, unless you assert your will, for the benefit of your body, this commission will be of no value in your hands. You will be on your back, prostrate with fever, in less than twenty-four hours. Now, it is useless to tell a man that he must feed, or physic, rest, or work, if his mind does not spring in concert with the counsel. I tell you what is before you—what is the trust given to your hands—what is the danger to the objects which you love—and

what is the degree of force that we can accord to you in the prosecution of your duties. We can do no more. Nobody can do more for you. You must do the rest for yourself. Look to the danger—look to the trust. Let your mind rise to the exigency, and you will grow strong; you must *will* it—*will* it—and sleep and eat, under the will which demands that you be strong. These ladies you can rescue—no doubt of it—if you give yourself a little time, and work with heart. Travis you may rescue. I see nothing to alarm you for the safety of either of these parties, if you only feel what you have to do, and resolve to do it with your usual promptness. If not—then God be merciful to this poor family, for they are all in a most serious danger.”

“Ah! if it be not too late, sir!” answered Sinclair, in choking accents.

“We are not to suppose this under any circumstances. It is sufficient to *find* it too late. The very fear that it is so, is apt to enfeeble the exertion, which would else provide the remedy. But, in the case of Travis and his son, it can not be too late, we know. We know the game of their captor, supposing him to be Inglehardt. His profit lies in keeping the secret of Travis, and using it against the terrors of his prisoner. It is only when he finds that nothing can be gained, in this way, that he will betray him. Meanwhile, we may be very sure that Inglehardt will keep father and son as secretly as safely. He would lose all hold upon the family were they surrendered as prisoners to the British. He has the two somewhere in private bonds. In respect to Mrs. Travis and her daughter, the rapidity with which they have been carried off is, itself, in some degree, proof of their safety. Brutality and outrage, if designed, would be perpetrated instantly, and their captors would not have burdened themselves with the prisoners. They are clearly kept for ransom; and this proves that they have been taken—if taken at all—by those who are not connected with the regular service; some outlying bands of tories; and we know that there have been several skulking about in this region. There has been some clever trick by which the tracks of the carriage have been concealed. In your impetuosity, you have probably failed to examine the ground with sufficient care. In all probability,

there has been some route across the Caw-caw nearer than the one at which you crossed, and over which they have been taken. It is not impossible, indeed, that they have crossed in the track of the British army, and have gone into Orangeburg."

"If Ballou were here! or even 'Bram!" said Sinclair.

And he mused, and speculated aloud. His mind was once more beginning to work, under the practical coercion of that of Rutledge. The latter knew quite well that the best relief for the despondency of an eager mind, is new responsibility and provocation—and he gave it. The discussion of probabilities succeeded. The general plan of the raid contemplated by the partisans was unfolded, in all its necessary details, for Sinclair's information; and, in its examination, he gradually showed to his hearers that he was beginning to exert that will, the activity of which, Rutledge insisted, was necessary to keep him from prostration by disease. At length Marion said:—

"Sinclair knows all that we need tell him, governor. Let him brood to-night—what there is left of it—over what he knows. He will have some leisure in the morning also, since none of the mounted men will take up the line of march until the infantry is sufficiently advanced. We must keep our ground here, and cover their departure from the enemy. If Rawdon marches out from Orangeburg, even with all the force of Cruger added to his own, we can head them at pleasure. Our friend, here, will have need to think for the next twelve hours, as to his own plan of operations. In that time he may hear from his scouts. At all events, whether he hears or not, his policy is now to be deliberate. He must re-examine the ground where the carriage was concealed; and to do this thoroughly, let him take any scout he pleases from my command. Ballou, if he comes in in season, is worth the whole of them; but if not, there are many who ought to be able to take and keep the track of a four-wheeled carriage drawn by four horses. Let us leave the rest to him."

The army moved off by dawn, leaving the mounted men and cavalry to cover the ground and conceal the fact of their departure. They did not move a moment too soon. They were no longer in a condition to be useful. Two thirds of the conti-

nentials were sick; the Virginia militia all sick, and in such a temper of despondency, that it was apprehended they would all abandon the camp that night, and disappear homeward, a large number having already deserted. The army (foot) had become an absolutely disorderly crew—demoralized by starvation, want of clothes, and the exhaustion of forced marches. The militia were generally discontent; alleging, in justification, the partiality shown to the continentals; and, especially, the petting of particular commands at the expense of the whole army. But, leaving them to their progress, which brought them finally in safety to their salubrious camp upon the Santee hills, we shall linger a few moments in that of the partisans—the mounted men, who, after covering the retreat of the infantry, were destined for active service on so many points below.

At two o'clock, on the morning of the 13th July, the army was in motion. At dawn, the general followed with his escort. So well did the mounted men cover the ground, and cut off all communications with Orangeburg, that Greene, with his foot, was beyond the Congaree before Rawdon suspected his departure.

Then were the mounted men let loose upon that memorable incursion into the Low Country, which drove the scattered parties of the enemy into the walls of Charleston, and prostrated the royal power to the very gates of that city. On the 14th July, the detachments of Sumter were sweeping all the avenues that led below, while he, with the main body, was pursuing the road along the southside of the Congaree, leading to the east of Cooper river. At the same time, Willie Sinclair, with the troop of St. Julien, was once more traversing, with measured steps, and keen scrutiny, the track pursued by the carriage of Mrs. Travis, to the moment when it turned aside for temporary refuge in the thicket. Our *dramatis personæ* are thus “all at sea.”

Here, a curtain falls, for the present, over the several parties. There is a necessary interval in which all is obscurity. A cloud envelopes the fortunes of Travis and his son; a mystery wraps the fate of his wife and daughter. But the pursuer is everywhere upon their heels, and a genius, courage, fortitude, and

zeal, which are sure to recover the fugitives, if this be possible to human enterprise and endeavor! Meanwhile, the two great rivals, the generals of Britain and America, are making their preparations for the final trial of strength between them. In their posts of watch and rest, they are recruiting their forces and bracing their sinews for the last wrestle for possession of the state. Meanwhile, the partisans are in motion, prompt in enterprise, and eager for performance. The details of their several progresses must be reserved for another volume, when we shall seek, in the tale of the bloody field of "Eutaw" to

"Ravel out
These weaved-up mysteries."

Till then, we pray the patience of such readers as are curious to learn the fate of those who have been the principal objects of our regard in the preceding chapters.

IN PREPARATION,

E U T A W ;

A SEQUEL TO

"THE FORAYERS, OR THE RAID OF THE DOG-DAYS."

By W. GILMORE SIMMS, Esq,

